PILGRIMAGE AND HOLY SPACE IN LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT

RELIGIONS IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

EDITORS

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AND
HOLY SPACE IN
LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT

EDITED BY

DAVID FRANKFURTER

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This series Religions in the Graeco-Roman World presents a forum for studies in the social and cultural function of religions in the Greek and the Roman world, dealing with pagan religions both in their own right and in their interaction with and influence on Christianity and Judaism during a lengthy period of fundamental change. Special attention will be given to the religious history of regions and cities which illustrate the practical workings of these processes.
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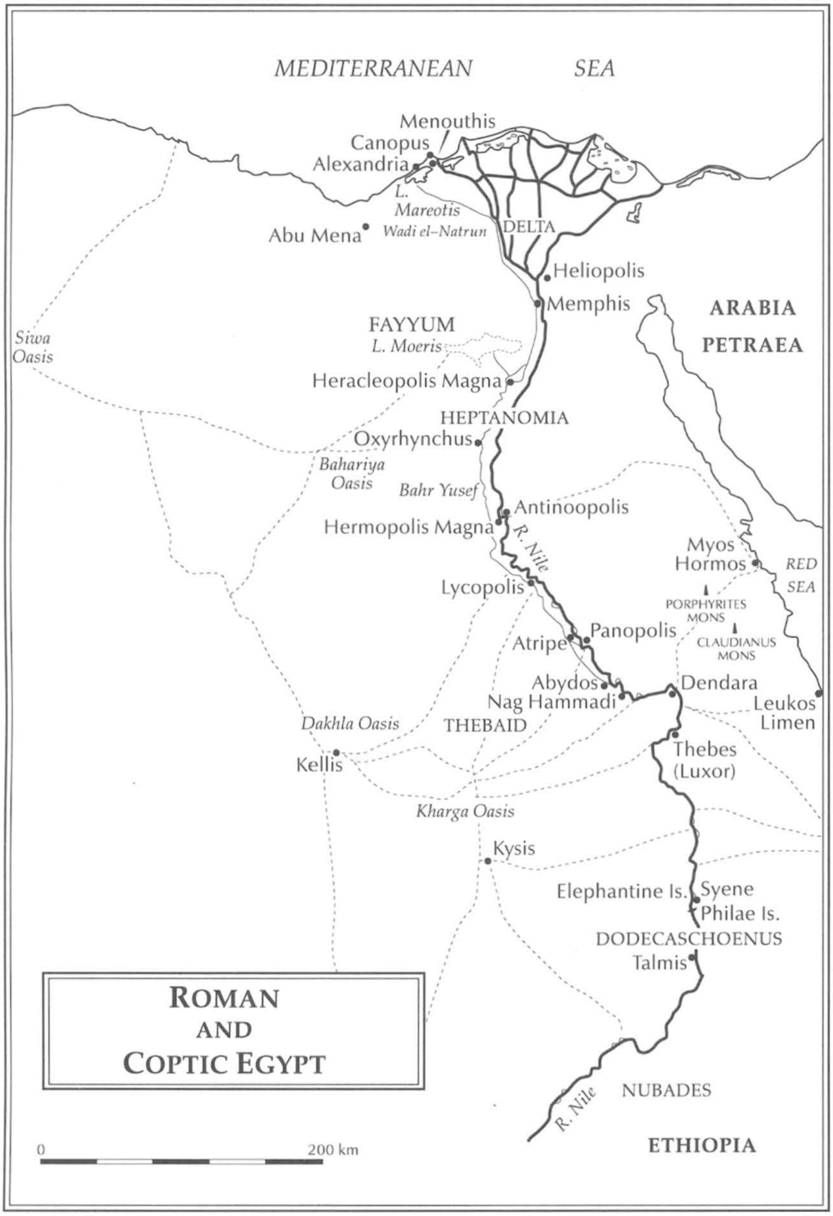
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Dedicated to the Memory of
Fr. Evasio DeMarcellis
Teacher and Friend

לברכה צדיק זכרונו

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I would name among the volume's principal fore-parents Julian Deahl, David Orton, and Leslie MacCoull. For their visions of this volume I am immensely grateful. But I must express my greatest thanks to the authors themselves, who volunteered their papers with minimal cajoling, left them in my hands, and suffered delays and demands with good cheer. I am also indebted to Terry Wilfong of the University of Michigan for advice and encouragement. Financial help in the final stages was graciously provided by Marilyn Hoskin, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of New Hampshire. I am as usual indebted to Chris Brest's exceptional maps.

I have dedicated *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* to one of the singular personalities in Northeastern American Egyptology and my late instructor in Egyptian languages. Polotsky disciple, parish priest, wine connoisseur, and friend, "Father Dee" initiated numerous students into the mysteries of Coptic and demotic out of his own generosity and devotion.

David Frankfurter
Durham NM

ABBREVIATIONS

AAAH	*Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam spectantia* (Oslo 1962–)
ArchAnz	*Archäologischer Anzeiger in Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts*
AAWW	*Anzeiger der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophische-Historische Klasse Wien*
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D.N. Freedman (6 vols.; Garden City, NY 1992)
ÄgAbh	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
AnBoll	*Analecta Bollandiana*
Annales ESC	*Annales Economie-Société-Civilisation*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, eds. W. Haase and H. Temporini (Berlin & New York)
Ant.Class.	*L'Antiquité Classique*
Archiv	*Archiv für Papyrusforschung*
ArchOr	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
ASAE	*Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*
ASAM	Association of Social Anthropologists, Monographs
ASP	American Studies in Papyrology
Atlal	*Atlal: Journal of Saudia Arabian Archaeology*
AVDAIK	Archäologische Veröffentlitchtungen, Deutsches Archäol. Institut, Abt. Kairo
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BARev	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASP	*Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*
BdE	Bibliothèque d'Études (IFAO)
BDF	F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago 1961)
BHG	*Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, 3rd ed. (Brussells 1977)
BIAUL	*Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of London*
Bib	*Biblica*
BICS	*Bulletin of the Institute for Classical Studies*
BIE	*Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*
BiOr	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BSAA	*Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie d'Alexandrie*
BSAC	*Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*
BSFE	*Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie*

BSR	*Biblioteca dí Scienze Religiose*
CArch	*Cahiers Archéologiques*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CdE	*Chronique d'Egypte*
CEPOA	Centre d'Etudes du Proche-Orient Ancien, Genève
CIG	Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CJZC	*Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika*, eds. Gert Lüderitz and Joyce M. Reynolds, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B, No. 53 (Wiesbaden 1983)
Cod. Theod	*Codex Theodosianus*
CPJ	*Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* 1–3, ed. Tcherikover, Fuks, Stern, and Lewis (Cambridge 1957–1964)
CS	Cistercian Studies
CSCL	Corpus Scriptorum Christanorum Latinorum
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
DACL	*Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie* (Paris 1907–53)
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EES	Egypt Exploration Society
EncJud	*Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem 1972)
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain
ERA	Egyptian Research Account
FIFAO	Fouilles de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale
GLAJJ	Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* 1–3 (Jerusalem 1974–1984)
GM	*Göttinger Miszellen*
GOF	*Göttinger Orientforschungen*
HÄB	Hildesheimer ägyptologische Beiträge
HR	*History of Religions*
HTBM	*Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, etc. in the British Museum* (London)
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICS	*Illinois Classical Studies*
IFAO	Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (Cairo)
JAA	*Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*
JAS	*Journal of Asian Studies*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*

JIGRE	William Horbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt: With an Index of the Jewish Inscriptions of Egypt and Cyrenaica* (New York 1992)
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRA	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KÄT	Kleine ägyptische Texte (Wiesbaden)
KRI	K. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions* (Oxford)
LÄ	*Lexikon der Ägyptologie* (Wiesbaden)
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	H. Liddell, R. Scott, H. Jones, R. McKenzie *et al.*, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford 1968)
MÄS	Münchner ägyptologische Studien
MDAIK	*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abt. Kairo*
MIFAO	Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale
MNL	*Meroitic Newsletter*
NA	*Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. Eb. Nestle, Er. Nestle, K. Aland, B. Aland, *et al.* (Stuttgart)
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
OBO	*Orbis biblicus et orientalis*
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta
OLP	*Orientalia lovanensia periodica*
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
OrChris	*Oriens Christianus*
OTP	*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 1–2, ed. J. Charlesworth (Garden City NY 1983–85)
P.Ant.	*Antinoopolis Papyri* 1–3, ed. Roberts (1), Barns and Zilliacus (2–3) (London 1950–67)
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne
PGM	*Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* 1–2, ed. K. Preisendanz (2nd ed.; Stuttgart 1973–74)
PJ	*Palästina-Jahrbuch*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*
P.Oxy	*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (London 1898–)

PSBA	*Proceedings of the Society for Biblical Archaeology*
RAPH	Recherches d'archéologie de philologie et d'histoire, Institut français d'archéologie orientale
RArch	*Revue archéologique*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RdE	*Revue d'égyptologie*
RE	*Real-Encyclopädie d. klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. Pauly-Wissowa
REB	*Revue des études byzantines*
RecTrav	*Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes*
RelS	*Religious Studies*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumran*
RHPR	*Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
RHR	*Revue d'histoire des religions*
SAE	Service des Antiquités de l'Egypte
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
ScrHier	*Scripta Hierosolymitana*
SH	Subsidia Hagiographica
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SPhA	*Studia Philonica Annual*
SSEA	Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
TAD	Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English* (4 vols.; Winona Lake, IN and Jerusalem 1986)
TextsS	Texts and Studies
TH	Théologie Historique
TQ	*Theologische Quartalschrift*
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
UBS	Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo Martini, Bruce Metzger, *et al., The Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart)
UPZ	Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit* (Berlin-Leipzig)
Urk.	*Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums* (Leipzig)
VC	*Vigiliae christianae*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
W.Chr.	*Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde*, ed. L. Mitteis & U. Wilcken (Leipzig-Berlin 1912)
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenland*
ZÄS	*Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION: APPROACHES TO COPTIC PILGRIMAGE

David Frankfurter

One might hear it read aloud on their commemoration day: how Paēse of Busiris and his sister Thekla, imprisoned as Christians, received a vision in the night before their next ordeal:

> ... And it befell that at midnight, lo, the Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven with His holy angels, ... and he said to them, "Hail, my fellow inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven! ..." And Thekla cast herself down at the feet of the Saviour, and said to Him, "My Lord, let Thy mercy attend us; and do Thou protect our bodies, so that the impious may not cast them to the wild beasts, and our bones be not found." The Saviour said to them, "Fear not; it is I Who will protect your bodies, and I will cause a martyr-shrine to be built for you in My Name; and whoso shall give an offering to your shrine, I will fill his house with every good thing on earth; and I will cause My angels to protect their bodies and their souls in the aeons of the light ... And I will set My blessing and My peace in the place where your bodies shall be laid. And behold, I have set the angel Raphael to minister to your shrine; and great numbers of sick people suffering from diverse diseases shall come to your shrine, and obtain healing, and go home in peace.[1]

Such promises would be remembered or assumed among the women and men seeking benefits at Paēse and Thekla's shrine. The text thus offered its audience a living charter for the presence and efficacy of Christian saints in a building somewhere in Egypt.[2] And as the above text explains (fairly typically to the genre), the saints' power enters the human world through rather simple means: Christ assures the preservation of the martyrs' bones, the erection of a shrine to house them, and the angelic expertise to maintain effective healing there. The relics in the shrine establish the "place [ⲡⲙⲁ]" of power

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[1] *Martyrdom of SS Paēse and Thekla* = Pierpont Morgan codex M591, T.28, fol. 85r, ii–85v, ii, ed. and tr. E.A.E. Reymond and J.W.B. Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices* (Oxford 1973), 75–76, 181–82.

[2] Cf. M. van Uytfanghe, "L'hagiographie et son public à l'époque mérovingienne," *Studia Patristica* (= TU 129) 16, 2 (1985):54–62.

(the general Coptic word also indicated a martyrial shrine), while the upper reaches of heaven provide the general authority and source of that power. It was usually understood that the holy martyrs would themselves descend from the heavenly palace on festival days to provide services and apparitions to their devotees.

This scenario, this image of yonder building as a conduit for the compassionate beings of heaven, lay before the pilgrim in Coptic Egypt. On reaching such a shrine he or she might collect dust from the stones or oil from the lamps near the martyrs' bones, sleep near them to receive their power (over many hours) or to dream their presence and benefits, attend their festival and listen to their trials and dismemberments, and perhaps ask of them, through their attendants, a written answer to a personal question.

The historian of Coptic Egypt finds these beliefs and practices apparent and familiar in miracle-collections, shrines living and dilapidated, icons and pilgrims' vials, and even the graffiti left on old walls. But they are equally recognizable to historians of other religions: pilgrimage, the pilgrimage shrine, and the acts of devotion upon reaching it belong to the very essence of human religiosity. Thus Michael Sallnow has described the contemporary Andean pilgrimage shrine, which rises at the place where a miraculous image appeared:

> The miraculous shrine that is its goal is a spot on the spiritually animated landscape where divine power has suddenly burst forth. Forces that are usually submerged have here broken the surface, in an epiphany that has become fixed in the perceptual territory of human beings. And not just in space: the shrine marks an irruption into history, the entry of the divine into the temporal as well as the spatial order of reality. By approaching it, pilgrims seek to tap its still active power, to draw this into their lives and thereby to induce existential change.[3]

From this perspective, it is as important to understand the Coptic materials as *examples* of that general phenomenon "pilgrimage" as it is to understand them in immediate historical context. This volume aims to combine both perspectives, scrutinizing particular pilgrimages (and their associated texts) in microscopic context while still cleaving to that broader, macroscopic or "etic" agenda of explaining pilgrimage itself.

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[3] Michael J. Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes: Regional Cults in Cusco* (Washington, DC 1987), 3.

I. *Pilgrimage in Late Antique Egypt: Perspective and Approach*

As ageless as it is in the history of religions, the metaphor of the journey has gained a peculiar resonance in the last several decades. One might attribute this interest to a backlash against that Protestant notion of distinguishing and even polarizing an interior "spirituality" from the exterior devotions and images of traditional piety.[4] Pilgrimage would seem the epitome of such traditional piety, and yet the newest discussions of pilgrimage emphasize not the traditionally outward symbols of the pilgrim's landscape and devotions but rather the personal process, the "ascent," as played out over the landscape. "Pilgrimage may be thought of as extroverted mysticism," assert Victor and Edith Turner, "just as mysticism is introverted pilgrimage."[5] What grips the modern imagination about pilgrimage is the space it provides for dynamic individuality within religious cultures that seem otherwise to emphasize participation and uniformity. Balancing interior spirituality and exterior rite and icon, individuality and assembly, pilgrimage might seem the perfect idiom for the contemporary faithful. It even allows secular analogies: the personal sites by which we all orient our lives and to which we repeatedly return (Eliade); the feelings that draw us toward those sites, like love itself or some instinctive *wanderlust* (Chatwin), or even the compass of the natural universe (Munro); and tourism and the allure of exotic spaces and distant monuments.[6] All our most contemporary sensibilities seem to find meaning and expression in the idea of pilgrimage.

By default, this volume may take its place on the same bookshelf of general pilgrimage studies. But it is, first, a study of Egypt and the pilgrimage traditions that defined the early and middle stages of Egyptian Christianity. Contributors are Egyptologists, Coptologists, Classicists, and scholars of early Christian history. The form of the contributions range from archaeological and papyrological descriptions to historical-anthropological discussions. The volume seeks not to comprehend pilgrimage as a late antique or Byzantine phenomenon—which of course it was also—but as an expressive attitude and act in Egyptian history. This *regional* approach to Christianity and other developing religions, viewing each one principally as a product of the culture in which it takes root, has been increasingly justified in studies of Syria, North Africa, Asia Minor, as well as Egypt.[7]

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[4] Cf. Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (New York 1973), chaps. 1–2.

[5] Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford 1978), 33.

[6] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, tr. Willard R. Trask (San Diego 1959), 24; Bruce Chatwin, *Songlines* (New York 1987); Eleanor Munro, *On Glory Roads* (New York 1987). Leslie MacCoull, in first imagining this volume, had planned to compare the allure of the holy site to love itself.

However, as a volume in the series *Religions of the Greco-Roman World*, this collection presents pilgrimage in late antique and Coptic Egypt as an *example* of pilgrimage in the history of Mediterranean religions. And since the growth of Christian pilgrimage is inextricably connected to the phenomenon and process of Christianization itself, the larger topic to which this volume pertains is not pilgrimage *per se*—as a human ideal—but rather the nature of Christianization as it plants itself in the landscape with pilgrimage shrines.

It is useful, therefore, to approach the growth of Egyptian Christian pilgrimage traditions in light of other cultures whose Christianization advanced through the establishment of various sacred sites in the landscape. Studies of Africa, Latin America, medieval European cultures, as well as specific parts of the late antique Mediterranean world have described the phenomenon in some detail: the installation of a holy site, either by apparition or deliberate missionary innovation, the presence of a holy man or miraculous relic, offers indigenous local culture the chance to assimilate new religious ideas into native idiom, existing social networks, and the experience of the natural environment.[8] Such studies of cultural conversion—including Islam and Buddhism—do not idealize an ahistorical pilgrimage process but rather emphasize the *catchment areas* of shrines—that is, the geographical and demographic extent of their appeal. Some shrines, that is, have a predominately local appeal, while others attract supplicants from a region, from an ethnic group spread across several regions, from an entire country, or even from multiple nations. In this approach one examines the relationships among shrines—how and to what extent they cooperate or compete among each other in the advice they offer to pilgrims, in the timing of festivals and form of processions, and in their relative *authority* vis-à-vis different catchment areas. Do pilgrims view shrines in a *concentric* system of increasing authority and power (and declining intimacy with the local environment), all the way up to the great national shrine, or as an array of distinct shrines, barely overlapping, with different forms of expertise. Do regional shrines embrace concentrically the multiple local shrines of the landscape, or do they stand alone from the local environment and competitively with other regional shrines? Is there a difference in ritual specialists—priests and prophets—and their traditions and the spirits they represent between local shrines, regional shrines and national shrines, or even between shrines of the same catchment area?

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[7] Cf. Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Berlin and New York 1982); Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* 2 (Oxford 1993); David Frankfurter, "Stylites and *Phallobatēs*: Pillar Religions in Late Antique Syria," *VC* 44 (1990):168–98, and "The Cult of the Martyrs in Egypt Before Constantine: The Evidence of the Coptic *Apocalypse of Elijah*," *VC* 48 (1994):25–47; and, for the study of Islam, Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed* (Chicago and London 1968). It is important to admit past errors in this approach: both Johannes Leipoldt (*Schenute von Atripe und die Enstehung des national ägyptischen Christentums*, TU 25 [Leipzig 1903]) and W.H.C. Frend (*The Donatist Church* [Oxford 1952]), while showing the distinctiveness of Coptic and North African Christianities, held onto unbased assumptions about class- and urban/rural conflicts and their influence on late antique heterodox movements.

[8] Among studies of these phenomena in late antiquity and the middle ages, see Robert Hertz, "St. Besse: A Study of an Alpine Cult," trans. by Stephen Wilson, *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History*, ed. by Stephen Wilson (Cambridge 1983), 55–100 [originally published *RHR* 67 (1913):115–80]; William A. Christian, Jr., *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton 1981) and *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton 1981), esp. 70–141; Frankfurter, "Stylites and *Phallobatēs*: Pillar Religions in Late Antique Syria"; Valerie I.J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton 1991); Vasiliki Limberis,

The approach to pilgrimage that initiates such questions is fundamentally inspired by Émile Durkheim to the extent that it views the shrine as the center of a social network and pilgrimage as a social process. But the approach has also proven sensitive to historical vicissitudes, comprehending the rise of a prophet-cult, for example, to arbitrate political disputes that local shrines could not handle, or the appearance of a new healing image as a trans-regional response to misfortune or cultural catastrophe.[9]

Furthermore, using Robert Redfield's heuristic distinction between "little" and "great" traditions, one can extend the regional approach

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Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople (London and New York 1994). On comparative studies, see Terence Ranger, "Taking Hold of the Land: Holy Places and Pilgrimages in Twentieth-Century Zimbabwe," *Past and Present* 117 (1987):158–94; Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*; Patricia Harrington, "Mother of Death, Mother of Rebirth: The Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe," *JAAR* 56 (1988):25–50; David Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica* (San Francisco 1990), chap. 5.

[9] See Victor Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* (Ithaca and London 1974), 166–230; Richard P. Werbner, ed. *Regional Cults*, ASAM 16 (London 1977); and John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow's excellent "Introduction" to their edited volume *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London and New York 1991), 1–29.

to pilgrimage to the political-institutional and literary spheres: how do local constituencies, on the one hand, and scriptural-institutional authorities on the other both cooperate and vie to define a cult and its activities? how does an historically specific "great tradition" provide an effective idiom for local religion?[10]

A perspective on pilgrimage that emphasizes the relative social scope of a shrine can encompass the complexities of what Victor Turner called the Archaic Pilgrimage, that oft-noted phenomenon in Christianity whereby native ("pagan") holy sites or practices are reconsecrated and even revitalized during the process of conversion.[11] The idea that a regional culture may already have its inevitable centers and traditions and that Christianization has accommodated itself to or reconfigured them improves upon earlier notions of "pagan survivals."

The layout of this volume frames the Egyptian and Coptic data in this broader, comparative context. "Indigenous Foundations" of Coptic pilgrimage include those native traditions of religious movement, festival, and shrine-devotion that might continue within Christianity or otherwise explain aspects of Coptic pilgrimage. However, "indigenous foundations" in Roman Egypt, as in other cases of transitional cultures, are far more complex than the mere scattering of priestly or folk traditions about temples or sacred springs that scholars of "survivals" once imagined. Both Hellenism, its various idioms and values, and the complex roots of Egyptian Christianity itself complicate any scenario of simple replacement of "paganism" by a monolithic religion of Christ. In laying out the various types of religious journey and shrine piety that prevailed at different periods of Egyptian history, the Egyptologist Youri Volokhine questions the applicability of the term "pilgrimage" to a traditional Egyptian religious life oriented toward the proximate shrine, the festival, and the group. Volokhine also stresses the difficulty of distinguishing individual pilgrimage to *distant* shrines, a phenomenon characteristic of the Greco-

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[10] Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization* (Chicago and London 1956), with useful nuancings and corrections of this approach in McKim Marriott, "Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization," *Village India: Studies in the Little Community*, ed. by McKim Marriott (Chicago 1955), 171–222; Gananath Obeyesekere, "The Great Tradition and the Little in the Perspective of Sinhalese Buddhism," *JAS* 22 (1963):139–53; James C. Scott, "Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition," *Theory and Society* 4 (1977):1–38, 211–46; and Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*, 4–10.

[11] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 18, and chaps. 2–3.

Roman period, from *tourism*, that quintessentially Greco-Roman activity celebrating the culturally exotic.[12]

So also Allan Kerkeslager, a specialist in early Egyptian Judaism, lays out the complexities in connecting Egyptian-Christian pilgrimage with Egyptian Jewish piety. It is still unclear what precise historical lines connect the diverse Egyptian Judaism that largely disappeared in the wars of 116–17 CE with the even more diverse Egyptian Christianity of subsequent centuries.[13] In the most exhaustive review yet of Jewish religious practices in Egypt that might have bearing on the evolution of Christian pilgrimage, Kerkeslager finds little evidence for real continuity, implying that Coptic appeals to biblical tradition in establishing holy places were inventions (much as the Christian Holy Land of Palestine was largely a Christian invention). But in considering the use of sacred places—temples, synagogues, graves, Jerusalem—for the construction of a Jewish cultural identity, Kerkeslager points to a much broader phenomenon in world religions: the way in which expatriate cultures manage to root themselves in the immediate landscape while still using distant geographical centers—in this case Jerusalem—or even mythical landscapes like Mt. Sinai to maintain a sense of distinctiveness. This distinctiveness also emerges in the tendency of Egyptian Jews to assimilate a broad Hellenism for its artistic and linguistic idiom, but to reject links with immediate Egyptian cults, however Hellenized these cults had themselves become.

As a general category, "The Great Regional Cults" takes a functional rather than confessional view of major pilgrimage shrines in Roman and Coptic Egypt: how do such shrines maintain, lose, expand, and contract their expansive catchment areas for devotees and visitors? Ian Rutherford covers the various peoples that regarded the

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[12] Cf. N. Hohlwein, "Déplacements et tourisme dans l'Égypte romaine," *CdE* 30 (1940):253–78; Victoria Foertmeyer, "Tourism in Graeco-Roman Egypt" (Dissertation, Princeton University, 1989); with remarks on the religious aspects of tourism by Jean Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," *Les pèlerinages*, Sources orientales 3 (Paris 1960), 57. On contemporary aspects of these distinctions see Erik Cohen, "Pilgrimage and Tourism: Convergence and Divergence," *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. by Alan Morinis (Westport, CT 1992), 47–61.

[13] See Birger A. Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis 1990); David Frankfurter, "The Cult of the Martyrs in Egypt Before Constantine" and "The Legacy of the Jewish Apocalypse in Early Christian Communities: Two Regional Trajectories," *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, Corpus Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 3.4, ed. by James C. VanderKam and William Adler (Assen/Maastricht and Minneapolis 1996), 142–70.

Isis temple at Philae, at the first cataract of the Nile, as a primary center of divine authority. The catchment area certainly shrank following the emperor Justinian's mutilation of the temple in 535–37 CE and through the political vicissitudes of that region in the following centuries, but not before Christian authorities sought earnestly to transfer the shrine and its pilgrims to Christ.[14]

The ancient historian Dominic Montserrat describes the establishment of the healing shrine of Saints Cyrus and John in the town of Menouthis, just east of Alexandria, and almost next door to a healing cult of the goddess Isis. It is still debated whether these cults were allowed to coexist for a period before the Isis-shrine was demolished in 484. The Menouthis cult has long represented one of the clearest examples in late antiquity of the appropriation of indigenous shrine *and cult* in late antique Christianization.[15] But where Greek and Christian texts describe pre-Christian Menouthis and nearby Canopus as drawing devotees from a fairly wide region, Montserrat shows that the Christian healing shrine that resulted had a predominately local catchment area.

Articles by Peter Grossmann and Stephen Davis discuss the cult of St. Menas in the desert west of Alexandria and the developments surrounding it. The wide diffusion of clay ampules with the saint's image upon them suggest that the Apa Mena shrine attracted pilgrims from throughout the Mediterranean, despite—or, rather, because of—its relatively remote location. Grossmann discusses the archaeological arrangement of the pilgrims' city of Abu Mina during its peak centuries. This complex of liturgical, hostel, and reliquary facilities was laid out deliberately to accommodate both rich and poor pilgrims, both monks and seekers of the saint's efficacious oil, both catechumens to the religion and devotees desirous of the saint's apparition in a dream. Grossmann, the principal archaeologist of the pilgrimage complex's remains, offers a concise review of the cult's expansion, decline, and network of economic relations.

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[14] On attempts to build Christian pilgrimage upon prior allegiance to Philae see Pierre Nautin, "La conversion du temple de Philae en église chrétienne," *Cahiers archéologiques* 17 (1967):1–43; Leslie S.B. MacCoull, "Christianity at Syene/Elephantine/Philae," *BASP* 27 (1990):151–62; and Tim Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt and the Life of Onnophrius by Paphnutius*, CS 140 (Kalamazoo, MI 1993).

[15] André Bernand, *Le delta égyptien d'après les textes grecs*, vol. 1: *Les confins libyques*, MIFAO 91 (Cairo 1970), 199–213; Ewa Wipszycka, "La christianisation de l'Égypte aux IV^{e}–VI^{e} siècles. Aspects sociaux et ethniques," *Aegyptus* 68 (1988):138–42; Sarolta Takács, "The Magic of Isis Replaced, or Cyril of Alexandria's Attempt at Redirecting Religious Devotion," *Poikila Byzantina* 13 (1994):489–507; and David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton 1998), § 4.3.1.

Davis's argument for an additional shrine en route to Apa Mena, dedicated to the widely-popular Asia Minor saint Thekla, shows how major shrines like Menas's became pantheons of a sort for other supernatural figures,[16] how pan-Mediterranean saints like Thekla could enter into rivalry with Egyptian saints like Menas, and how a woman-oriented cult like Thekla's could develop alongside the shrine of a military saint like Menas. Davis suggests that itinerant women from a wide area were the primary devotees of the Thekla shrine; further discoveries may enlarge the history of this important cult within Egypt.

Many books have explored, with insight and passion, the role of monasticism and the position of the monastery in the Christianization of Egypt, and it is vital to examine the various enchantments these structures and their founders offered to outsiders.[17] The great abbot Shenoute of Atripe (d. 466), founder of one of the most successful, populous, and influential monasteries in Egypt, provides the case study in Heike Behlmer's article (and, later, Janet Timbie's). Revered like the desert hermits as a possessor of supernatural powers, ambitious to replace local heathenism with the authority of Christ, Shenoute captivated people at all levels of society, and people visited his monastery for many reasons. Whether we can discern "pilgrimage" in the monastery's allure or just the appeal of an intellectual center is an open question, however. Shenoute himself denigrated the martyr cult, for example, reflecting a personal distance from the kind of piety that would create a physical "cult of Shenoute" like that of other holy men. But other materials from his life and subsequent hagiography suggest the abbot was viewed as a supernatural intermediary of considerable proportion. Indeed, Janet Timbie's article on pilgrimage rites at Shenoute's monastery in subsequent centuries suggests that his very relics received popular devotions.

The last paper in this section provides important cultural *comparanda* for the Coptic pilgrimage cults. The Arabist Irfan Shahid discusses the rise of similar cults in the Arab Middle East and the integral function they played in the development of an Arab Christianity before Islam. Perhaps even more than in Coptic Egypt, these Arab pilgrimage cults integrated regional identity and Christian affiliation and located the various "tribal Christianities" through such practices as shrine devotion, patronage, and participation in festivals. The political and social worlds within which the Coptic and Arabic pilgrimage cults were planted differ considerably. Yet one finds important similarities in the role that the regional cult played in establishing Christianity in culturally diverse landscapes.

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[16] Cf. Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 223–24.

[17] See Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Crestwood, NY 1966); Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 1975), esp. chap. 4; Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley 1985); Armand Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. by Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring (Philadelphia 1986), 271–306.

Lest pilgrimage be viewed as merely travel to sights or excursions to markets (both of which elements, to be sure, have always played a part in pilgrimage traditions), the fourth section addresses the rites and gestures by which people established some connection with a shrine. Other papers in the volume have highlighted the combination of practical/concrete rites in which people engaged—healing, incubation, collection of efficacious substances like oil or sand, purchase and depositing of votive objects—and more formal rites, often led by priests, that served to dramatize the authority of the church in the context of the local saint-shrine.

In some cases the synthesis of official ritual and local tradition is striking. Lucia Papini's publication of fragments of the *Sortes Sanctorum*, a divination text of some popularity in the late antique Christian world, provides further evidence of a long-forgotten cult from Coptic Egypt, that of St. Colluthus at Antinoë, and expands our knowledge of diversity of ritual activities at Coptic shrines. In this case, priests of the shrine had revived an ancient Egyptian oracle procedure for the private answering of individual concerns, a procedure conducted through the medium of written questions and answers. Papini's fragments, not from this "exchange" oracle but from a related oracular *book*, show us the range of oracle procedures conducted under the aegis of St. Colluthus.

Leslie MacCoull's article shows the assimilation of Christian liturgical chant to the needs and cultic realities of the pilgrimage shrine. From the use of Psalms to the composition of special hymns to monastic founders or saints, in such contexts as festival processions and daily masses, singing allowed pilgrims the opportunity to make formal appeal to a variety of supernatural powers, to participate in the memorializing of a local figure, and to comprehend (at least for a moment) the unity of church and saint-shrine, wherein the most local of saints might be celebrated in the music and liturgical language of the greater church.

Janet Timbie brings us back to Shenoute's Monastery as pilgrimage goal. She discusses an important form of pilgrim's rite, the stational pilgrimage, in which a circumscribed area in the environs of the major shrine is marked out as a miniature route of shrines, with specific hymns, prayers, gestures, or texts to be recited at each point. The text that Timbie discusses actually outlines such a route: it apparently wound through the hills surrounding the monastery. The pilgrimage would take place in procession, venerating a number of sites of holy figures associated with the monastery (including, it seems, Shenoute's own relics).

The final section of this volume looks at two figures who sought to redirect that distinctly Egyptian-Christian impetus to pilgrimage, away from shrines and towards other "centers." The fourth-century Alexandrian bishop Athanasius wanted to direct the "locative" sentiments of Christians toward the episcopate and its scripture, while the anonymous *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, a fifth-century account of a protracted tour of Egyptian hermits, would direct them toward the literary and exoticist tastes of the literate Mediterranean Christian. Using Athanasius's sermons and festal letters, David Brakke lays out the bishop's sustained attack on the typical piety surrounding martyrs' shrines in order to promote a church- and Bible-centered piety. Georgia Frank compares the *Historia monachorum*, one of our chief sources for desert hermits and their cults (even if typically hagiographical), to the Greco-Roman travelogue. She demonstrates that such "regional cult-centers" as these hermits represented in Egypt could be appropriated for literary consumption—a vicarious pilgrimage of sorts.

II. *Ritual and Geography*

We think with what surrounds us—with what we see, walk through, drink from, eat of, and steer away from. Claude Lévi-Strauss thus described the way flora and fauna are used to articulate social identity and its vicissitudes. So also Arnold Van Gennep described the territorial passage as the primary narrative or myth that societies use to describe life-cycle change. The processes of initiation, of marriage, of death are played out *across landscape*; landscape provides the means for articulating shift.[18] Studies of local territories and their religions have shown that beneficence and its protection, misfortune and its explanation and resolution, and the accessibility of useful power might be played out through geography—the distinguishing and labelling of places.[19] In the history of Peruvian religion, Michael Sallnow has described,

> Power ..., both dominant and subversive, was always spatial, mapped out across the variegated natural environment and thus appearing to issue from the landscape itself. Social relations became spatial relations, conceptualized through an energized landscape finely contoured in accordance with gross physical topography. Political control was extended and consolidated by gaining control of the landscpae, by annexing and reenergizing sacred sites and orienting them to new politico-religious centers.[20]

The mapping of religious and social experience across landscape is expressed through ritual action. With most saint's shrines in the Iranian city of Shiraz devoted to distinct ailments, for example, resolution comes from the deliberate journeying to the appropriate saint in his or her district.[21] During the Egyptian Late Period, oracular amuletic decrees, rolled into capsules that were strung around the neck, would repel demons (*weret*) "of (a pool) left (by the inundation), ... of a runnel, ... of a well, ... of a lake, ... of a hollow, ... of the mountains, ... of all swamps,"—misfortune itself mapped onto the landscape and comprehended through the landscape.[22] Exteriorization, the mapping of misfortune, and the physical response to that "map" are all modes of clarification, helping people to avoid the inchoate. One acts out crisis by means of the landscape: responses to earthquake and plague in post-conquest Mexico and Peru involved processions with images—movement through, around, and past particular sites provided the experience of response and resolution.[23]

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[18] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, tr. Rodney Needham (Boston 1963), 89, and *The Savage Mind* (Chicago 1966), esp. chap. 1; Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago 1960), esp. chap. 2. For a more recent discussion of these principles see Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments* (Oxford and Providence, RI 1994).

[19] See, for example, Christian, *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain*, 17–20; Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*, 10–13; Charles Stewart, *Demons and the Devil* (Princeton 1991), 102–4, 156–57, 164–69, 217–18, 276–77; Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*, 204–13, 255, 262–68; Lisa M. Bitel, *Isle of the Saints: Monastic Settlement and Christian Community in Early Ireland* (Ithaca and London 1990), 42–56; and Mauno Koski, "A Finnic Holy Word and its Subsequent History," *Old Norse and Finnish Religions and Cultic Place-Names*, ed. by Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo 1990), 404–40.

[20] Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*, 97–98.

[21] Anne H. Betteridge, "Specialists in Miraculous Action: Some Shrines in Shiraz," *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, 189–209.

[22] P.B.M. 10587r, tr. I.E.S. Edwards, *Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the Late New Kingdom* 1, Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum 4 (London 1960), 39; see Edwards xxii.

The very necessity of movement, of passage, therefore, seems in many cases to govern the structure of pilgrimage, for it is in moving that people perceive the layout of holiness—even cosmology itself. Some pilgrimage traditions, indeed, traverse a circuit, avoiding a single goal (while marking numerous shrines or mythically imbued sites along the way), while others have conceived the ultimate pilgrimage to be an endless wandering.[24] Other, more linear journeys allow no rest at the end but rather a concentration of miniature "stational" pilgrimages, highly formalized (and highly charged), through the central shrine and its environs. And if the landscape needed for effective ritual is unavailable, it can be appropriated or built, a phenomenon perhaps best studied for late antiquity in the history of the stations of the cross (and other stational pilgrimages). There was indeed no "original" landscape or map of the stations of the cross but the Gospel narratives themselves; and with Jerusalem ploughed under the Roman Aelia Capitolina, nothing remained to "discover." The fourth-century Holy City that Constantine endowed was an invention from whole cloth, constructed to give visible topography to the legends, sacred books, and developing liturgy.[25] With the enthusiasm for pilgrimage that this physical theatre generated, it took little time for imitative "liturgical Jerusalems" in Europe to sprout-microcosms of the principal circuit.[26]

Stational pilgrimages like that outlined in Janet Timbie's article, in which devotees pass from site to site in a circumscribed area according to traditional pattern, performing typed gestures and austerities at each point, are almost limitless in their capacity to embrace the religious cosmos. A festival procession in a contemporary Mayan village slowly walks around the church, stopping at the four cardinal points, with the explicit sense of circumambulating the cosmos. St. Patrick's Purgatory, an early medieval Irish circuit on an island, involves not only the stations of the cross but also devotions to chief Irish saints.[27] Significantly, both examples also come from cultures that asserted their indigenous traditions upon the process of Christianization, a dynamic I shall discuss in more detail below. St. Patrick's Purgatory, however, shows the potential in this ritual mapping to combine narratives from the core of Christian tradition (the stations of the cross) with those of the regional traditions (the Irish saints), all miniaturized as shrines on an island.[28]

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[23] See Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*, chap. 4; Harrington, "Mother of Death, Mother of Rebirth," 40–47.

[24] Pilgrimage circuits: see David L. Haberman, *Journey Through the Twelve Forests: An Encounter With Krishna* (New York 1994), esp. chap. 2; pilgrimage circuit of Kobo Daishi on island of Shikoku (Japan). Endless wandering as pilgrimage goal: Kathleen Hughes, "The Changing Theory and Practice of Irish Pilgrimage," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 11 (1960):143–51. On stational pilgrimages see below, § VI.

[25] See esp. Pierre Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient: histoire et géographie, des origines à la conquête arabe* (Paris 1985), 25, 34–35; Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago 1987), chap. 4; and Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven 1992), chaps. 5–6.

[26] See Robert Ousterhout, "Loca Sancta and the Architectural Response to Pilgrimage," *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. by Robert Ousterhout (Urbana and Chicago 1990), 108–24; cf. Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 224, on facsimiles of the Mexican Guadalupe shrine.

Egyptian religion, the major "indigenous foundation" for the sacred landscape and shrines of Coptic culture, had long used the landscape for the mapping of ritual and the articulation of belief. Volokhine, in his essay in this volume, aptly describes peregrination as the basic structure of Egyptian mythological texts, from spells to mortuary books. This theme appears all the more vividly in a late papyrus in the Brooklyn Museum, apparently from the Heliopolis priesthood, describing places in the Delta as the sites of various mythological events. In the Ptolemaic-era Papyrus Jumilhac, all Egypt becomes the stage for the battle of Osiris and Seth. In the "Book of the Fayyum," still copied under Hadrian, the Fayyum cults are mapped according to the scheme of a cosmic temple, such that the whole region becomes the stage for ritual and divine interaction. And the "Book of Traversing Eternity," copied through the second century CE, renders the geography of the afterlife according to the real geography of Egypt's Osiris cults, each cult-site providing the deceased the opportunity to perform one of the all-important afterlife rituals.[29]

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[27] Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, 147–53; Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, chap. 3.

[28] See Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 117–18.

[29] P. Brooklyn Museum 47.218.84, described in Dimitri Meeks, "Un Manuel de géographie religieuse du Delta," *Akten des vierten internationalen ägyptologen Kongresses, München 1985* 3, ed. by Sylvia Schoske (Hamburg 1989), 297–304. Papyrus Jumilhac: Jacques Vandier, *Le papyrus Jumilhac* (Paris 1961). "Book of the Fayyum": Horst

These were priestly compositions and as such quite idealized schemes, mapped onto a landscape of discrete cults. But in Egypt the priestly impetus to organize and hierarchize the cults of the land did not take place in a world apart from local religion. Indeed, such texts often asserted quite idiosyncratic religious geographies that were peculiar to individual cults and their surrounding religious worlds—and invariably competitive with others'. Festival processions of the regional god through the landscape (or down the Nile) involved public and dramatic rendezvous with local shrines, a tour often lasting a month or so. Hieroglyphic inscriptions at the god Khnum's temple at Esna bear witness to such gods' pilgrimage circuits continuing in the third century CE.[30] These annual rituals reaffirmed the network, hierarchy, and mythological interconnection of local and main shrines.

To proceed through the landscape therefore involved, if not the recollection of specific journeys of the gods (a perspective more associated with Australian aboriginal cultures), at least a movement through gods' domains and between their shrines, in a ritually and mythologically integrated landscape.[31] The traveller need not have kept a panoramic mythology in mind as he paid homage to the local gods through whose territories he was passing. Such devotions would simply have been prudent and respectful, as a famous Roman-era inscription from the temple of Mandulis at Kalabsha advises: "Revere the divine. Do ritual honors [*thue*] to all the gods. Travel to make worship at every shrine ..."[32]

Pilgrimage in general, but especially in Egypt, arises from the definition of landscape according to shrines and from the articulation of religious authority and belief by means of the landscape (or

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Beinlich, *Das Buch vom Fayum: zum religiösen Eigenverständnis einer ägyptischen Landschaft* (Wiesbaden 1991), with Philippe Derchain, *BiOr* 51 (1994):42–50. "Book of Traversing Eternity": François René Herbin, *Le Livre de Parcourir l'Éternité*, OLA 58 (Leuven 1994), esp. 288–308.

[30] Serge Sauneron, *Les fêtes religieuses d'Esna aux derniers siècles du paganisme*, Esna 5 (Cairo 1962), esp. 31–35, 47–67, on Khnum's fertility procession to Pi-Khoum, where local gods also come to visit him. See also Michel Malaise, "Pèlerinages et pèlerins dans l'Égypte ancienne," *Histoire des pèlerinages non chrétiens. Entre magique et sacré: le chemin des dieux*, ed. by Jean Chelini and Henry Branthomme (Paris 1987), 56–58.

[31] On Australian aboriginal views of the landscape as ancestors' tracks, see now Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape*, 37–54.

[32] W.Chr. 116 = CIG III.5041 (II/III CE, Kalabsha), translating *thue* as "do ritual honors" rather than "sacrifice," which connotes a type of lay ritual unusual to Egypt.

its artificially constructed miniature inside a shrine). Landscape, to paraphrase Lévi-Strauss, is "good to think with," but we do our thinking by walking through it. We define concern, misfortune, beneficence, even religious identity in the course of movement to a place. We comprehend new cosmologies by mapping them upon the landscape: the Coptic legend of the journey of the Holy Family through the Egyptian countryside, for example, links Gospel, native landscape, and the potential to enact this link ritually.[33] Considering how Roman Egyptian and Coptic pilgrimages would take supplicants off across the desert to the oracle on the Siwa Oasis or to Apa Menas's shrine, south beyond the first cataract to Kalabsha, as well as into the wilderness of diverse desert hermits, one cannot underestimate the importance of geography itself as the very arena for ritual, belief, and religious definition.[34]

III. *Center and Periphery, Local and Global: Shrines in Their Social Context*

The preceding observations on movement and landscape highlighted those pilgrimages—stational, circular, peripatetic—that lack concrete endpoints, in which the journey is "through" or "by" more than "to." Goal-less pilgrimages are rare, however. The shrines and sacred sites along pilgrimage circuits are imbued with power, and even stational pilgrimages and their liturgies come at the *ends* of journeys—a special sequence of shrines and gestures concentrated at the very midpoint of heaven and earth. Then again, "pilgrimage" for most small communities goes not to the distant *axis mundi* but to the shrine just beyond town, or in the center of one's city, or down an alley, or perhaps a single day's journey into the hills. At the same time, the needs that propel people towards that shrine tend to be concrete and practical, not the existential stuff of the long circuit or endless journey. Thus we turn from geography as the medium of religious system to the location of shrines vis-à-vis the people who venerate them.

Victor Turner's own approach to religious geography stressed the shifts and rivalries that arise between shrines at a geographical-cultural *center* and those at its *periphery*. The central shrine represents the authority of the dominant religious system, and pilgrimage there implies acquiescence to that authority as superceding one's local landscape and shrines. Like bolts along the spokes of a wheel, local landscapes and their shrines lie on the concentric outskirts of the central shrine, according to this perspective. However, under certain historical circumstances a shrine (in some cases, a prophet or charismatic healer) on the *periphery* of that very system may attract thaumaturgical reputation, pilgrims, and even its own kind of religious authority. Pilgrimage to such an outlying site, then, represents a departure, socially and politically, from the real or imagined, strong or faltering, central religious system. In many cases it is the peripheral shrine that comes to be imbued with the most power and the most accessibility.[35]

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[33] See Otto F.A. Meindardus, *Christian Egypt: Ancient and Modern* (Cairo 1965), chap. 29; Leslie MacCoull, "Holy Family Pilgrimage in Late Antique Egypt: The Case of Qosqam," *Akten des XII. internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie* 2:987–92.

[34] See also Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 184–87.

One of the hallmarks of Greco-Roman culture was the allure of the peripheral, where might be found the exotic, the true, the most ancient, and the surest route to the spiritual truths envisioned by urbane Romans. "This I shall do," declares a Roman youth in an early Christian novel,

> I shall proceed to Egypt, and there I shall cultivate the friendship of the hierophants or prophets, who preside at the shrines. Then I shall win over a magician by money, and entreat him, by what they call their necromantic art, to bring me a soul from the infernal regions, as if I were desirous of consulting it about some business. But this shall be my consultation: whether the soul be immortal.[36]

This type of pilgrimage, which has analogues in journeys taken by elite Alexandrians all the way to Philae, Kalabasha, Siwa, or simply the ruined statue of Memnon, often sounds more like spiritual tourism than pilgrimage.[37] The emphasis is upon the individual and his or her transformation, not the collective enthusiasm of devotees at a shrine's annual festival. Indeed, it may be exactly in the solo "peripheral pilgrimage" *across cultures* that pilgrimage and tourism as forms of symbolic travel lose meaningful distinction. The exotic allure of the peripheral in this case reinforces the hegemony of the central religious cosmos.[38]

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[35] Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 191–97, 227–28.

[36] Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions* I.5, tr. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Christian Library* (Edinburgh 1867), 3:145. On the allure of "oriental wisdom" in late antiquity see A.D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford 1933), 107–10, and Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, tr. J. Bowden (Philadelphia 1974), 210–15.

[37] See Nearchos's description of his itinerary to Philae and Siwa in W.Chr. 117 = P.Lond. III.854; Arthur Darby Nock, "A Vision of Mandulis Aion," *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* 1, ed. by Zeph Stewart (Oxford 1972), 356–400, on clients of the Kalabsha cult; Glen W. Bowersock, "The Miracle of Memnon," *BASP* 21 (1984):21–32; and Étienne Bernand, "Pèlerins dans l'Égypte grecque et romaine," *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque* 1, ed. by Marie-Madeleine Mactoux and Evelyne Geny, Centre de Recherches d'Histoire Ancienne 79 (Paris 1988), 49–63.

Central and peripheral shrines possess different, even opposing sources of thaumaturgical efficacy. *Relics*, as William Christian has found in Spanish Christianity, are very much tools of centralization, imported (often, according to legend, from the periphery of culture) into a city or other cultural center in order to galvanize that center's authority and supernatural associations (or to give notoriety to a monastery or a nobleman's collection).[39] When relics are brought into a pre-existing or defunct religious center, like Menouthis in Dominic Montserrat's contribution, they reassert the relative central authority of the place under the new religious system, keeping it from becoming, through its archaic associations, a peripheral pilgrimage goal for those disenchanted with the new way of Christianity.[40]

But *apparitions* and miraculous images, Christian argues, originate on the periphery of both culture and the domesticated environment, and they require shrines to be built at, and pilgrimages to be directed to, nowhere else than that place. Thus Christian, like Sallnow for Peru and Turner for Mexico, have suggested that the establishment and rise of apparition-based shrines amounted to a rejection of imported, centralizing Christian cults (or the political systems that sponsored them) in favor of indigenous Christian cults. The unbreakable link between the miraculous object and some wildly inconvenient spot on a mountain signifies the assertiveness of indigenous culture itself.[41]

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[38] Cf. Cohen, "Pilgrimage and Tourism: Convergence and Divergence," as well as essays by Volokhine, Behlmer, and Frank in this volume.

[39] Christian, *Apparitions in Medieval and Renaissance Spain*, 19–21. Cf. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago 1981), 88–94; Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (rev. ed.; Princeton 1990); and Cyril Mango, "Constantine's Mausoleum and the Translation of Relics," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990):51–61.

[40] Cf. Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 227.

[41] Christian, *Apparitions*, 19–21; cf. Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*, chaps. 3–4, and Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 191–98. It is important to note that traditional Egyptian religious attitudes took a dim and fearful view of apparitions, which formed a special category of demonic occurrence repelled by the amuletic decrees (above, n. 26). The dream apparitions gained during incubation took place *in* shrines. The same fear of *random* apparitions continued in Coptic tradition: desert hermits

Centralizing forces will nevertheless exert pressure on the more popular peripheral shrines. Amulets, radiating the charisma of a place or person marked by peripheral or counter-cultural status, inevitably become commodities and often the prestigious trappings of an ecclesiastical or civic elite.[42] Sometimes the domestication of peripheral power will take more direct form, as when ecclesiastical officers wrest a sacred object from its distant place to transfer it to a central, urban shrine (and coining a legend in support of this "translation"). The sixth-century translation of the relics of St. Simeon the Stylite after his death is revealing in this regard. Alive, he remained utterly on the periphery of the Mediterranean *oikumenē*, perched on a hillside in rural Syria, a wielder of native symbols, a living *eikōn*. Dead, he became a divisible conglomerate of relics, rushed first to Antioch (in fear of earthquakes), his cloak later to be installed in Constantinople, while the pillar on which he stood for thirty years became the axis of one of Byzantium's major shrines.[43] The miraculous painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe, while still ensconced in the chapel built for it on the outskirts of sixteenth-century Mexico City, became adopted by city and archbishop as *patrona* following her victory over a plague, and reproductions of her image were disseminated widely.[44] And St. Menas off in the desert became one of the most popular goals for Christian pilgrims in the late antique world.

Before applying these dynamics more specifically to Roman and Coptic Egypt, one should remember that the phenomena of religion, holy place, and pilgrimage do not simply shift between center and periphery as if between discrete poles. In most cultures there are a multitude of shrines that cluster in and around the village or town, from domestic shrines, to district or city temples, to the various shrines for offering devotions along roads. Festivals and processions often serve to link various networks of shrines. In other words, the geographical religious experience is one of concentric or overlapping

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fight them as demonic, while beneficent epiphanies of biblical prophets and saints take place in monastery, cell, or martyrion.

[42] See Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets* (Cambridge 1984), chap. 22.

[43] Translation to Antioch: *Syriac Life of St. Simeon Stylites* 125–28, tr. Robert Doran, *The Lives of Simeon Stylites*, CS 112 (Kalamazoo, MI 1992), 192–94. Simeon's *Life by Antonius* as well as the *Life of Daniel the Stylite* (58) betray a Constantinopolitan perspective on the distribution of Simeon-relics. On Simeon's use of autochthonous symbolism see David Frankfurter, "Stylites and *Phallobatēs*."

[44] Harrington, "Mother of Death, Mother of Rebirth," esp. 45–46.

spheres of protection and supernatural patronage, very much tied to social identity. A village shrine and its festival may reaffirm the domestic shrine; brotherhoods affiliated with district shrines may convene as such at the festival of the city shrine; and villages and hamlets may pay annual homage—or journey as a last resort—to the regional shrine.[45] Pilgrimage itself more often involves an annual visit to a relatively proximate shrine with which one has some close social connection than a once-in-a-lifetime voyage to a distant "center."[46] Thus Turner and others have categorized the sacred shrines commonly visited in a village's religious life in terms of *local* and *regional* cults, whose respective divinities and spheres of authority are sometimes hierarchical, usually complementary.[47]

Research on regional cults has emphasized the political relationship between regional and local shrines, the social dimensions of making pilgrimage to the regional shrine, and the differences in ritual forms and leadership styles between local and regional cults. The attraction or authority of the regional cult, for example, may lie in its type of oracle, in the presence of an ecstatic prophet rather than a priest, in its affiliation with a different sort of god or spirit from the ones popular locally, or in a particular sacred object. The authority may lie simply in its pretense to administrate religious issues over a broad geographical range. One often finds rapid innovation and change in regional cults at the same time as a relative conservatism in the local cults.[48]

Do these observations apply to Roman and Coptic Egypt? Although local and even domestic shrines are amply documented in Egypt from at least the New Kingdom, large regional and even transregional cults like Thebes, Elephantine, Dendara, and Abydos often sought to embrace local shrines and consolidate these shrines' discrete traditions through ritual, text, and iconography. Thus a kind of great tradition remained in perpetual and dynamic interplay with the local traditions. As in all cultures, the fortune and character of these regional cults and the extents of their catchment areas changed dramatically over time.[49]

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[45] See Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 211–22.

[46] See Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*; Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*, chaps. 6–7 and *passim; idem*, "Pilgrimage and Cultural Fracture in the Andes," *Contesting the Sacred*, 147. On domestic/village shrine interaction see Stephan Feuchtwang, "Domestic and Communal Worship in Taiwan," *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, ed. by Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford 1974), 105–29. Pauline Donceel-Voûte has noted the priority of regional, festival-oriented "pilgrimages" over distant journeys in late antique Christian piety: "Le rôle des reliquaires dans les pèlerinages," *Akten des XII. internationalen Kongresses für christliche archäologie*, 1:203–5.

[47] See above, n. 9.

[48] See Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 184–87, and Werbner, ed., *Regional Cults*.

With the expansion of Hellenistic culture in the Ptolemaic period the notion of local and supra-local took on quite different meanings throughout the Mediterranean world. For now Greek language and iconography could provide the means both for a cult to transcend its local associations—e.g., through identification with a Greek god—and also for the cult to consolidate its local power and authority, for example, through incorporating elements of Hellenistic iconography into its shrine or Hellenistic poetry into its festival.[50] Through this multivalent idiom provided by Hellenism, Egyptian local religion maintained itself, as we see in the voluminous documentation for local shrines and festivals throughout the Greco-Roman period.[51] In many religious settings, however, the stakes were changed in the conceptualization of and competition for religious authority. By the Roman period, a larger cosmos for divine action required ever more creativity on the part of the regional shrine to hold a position of ultimate appeal or administration vis-à-vis ongoing local shrines. So, for example, papyri and archaeological sites show that a great variety of oracle cults were operating by the second century CE, and even if there were no more than had typically operated in Egypt at any time, still the use of Greek in many of them and their effective advertising beyond the region suggest a competitive creativity typical of regional cults.[52]

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[49] See, on Roman period, Olaf E. Kaper, "Temples and Gods in Roman Dakhleh: Studies in the Indigenous Cults of an Egyptian Oasis" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1997), and Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, chap. 3.

[50] See Françoise Dunand, "Les syncrétismes dans la religion de l'Égypte romaine," *Les syncrétismes dans les religions de l'antiquité*, EPRO 46, ed. by Françoise Dunand and Pierre Lévêque (Leiden 1975), 152–85; *idem, Religion populaire en Égypte romaine*, EPRO 77 (Leiden 1979); Glen W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor MI 1990); Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, § 3.1–2.

[51] See in general Alan K. Bowman, *Egypt After the Pharaohs* (Berkeley 1986), 171–74, with specific papyrological data in Françoise Perpillou-Thomas, *Fêtes d'Égypte ptolémaïque et romaine d'après la documentation papyrologique grecque*, Studia Hellenistica 31 (Louvain 1993), and analysis in Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, §§ 2.4–5 and 3.

[52] See Mary Beard, "Writing and Religion: *Ancient Literacy* and the Function of the Written Word in Roman Religion," *Literacy in the Roman World*, *JRA* Supp. 3 (Ann Arbor 1991), 35–58, and Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, chap. 4; cf. John

In the second century CE, for example, we find the domestic fertility god Bes, hitherto of no known central cult, promoted as an oracle deity of international renown, believed to speak from a room in the Osiris chambers of the great Abydos temple. Queries were directed to Bes of Abydos from throughout the empire. The god spoke on all subjects, and some sort of priesthood sent off the god's answers. When the Christian emperor closed the cult in 359, it shrank to a local habitat of Bes with minimal priesthood. This final cult site was eradicated in the fifth century, the object of a dramatic exorcism by one Apa Moses.[53]

The Christianization of the Egyptian countryside then becomes another chapter in the shifts of authority between local, regional, and trans-regional loci of supernatural power in the history of Egyptian religion. In this case, however, the new form of regional cult centers on a type of thaumaturge-prophet who defines himself in direct competition with (and often opposition to) traditional modes of power and supernatural access: the holy man or desert hermit of legend. Although this volume lacks an overview of these figures as recipients of pilgrimage, we may usefully refer to Peter Brown's work on the topic.[54] As one source describes the fifth-century hermit John of Lycopolis, John served both "his own fellow citizens" and "strangers who came to see him," dispensing magic oil and delivering oracles from heaven.[55] Many if not most charismatic figures seem to have

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D. Ray, "Ancient Egypt," *Oracles and Divination*, ed. by Michael Loewe and Carmen Blacker (Boulder, CO 1981), 184–85.

[53] Ammianus Marcellinus 19.12, with pilgrims' *proskynēmata* in Paul Perdrizet and Gustave Lefebvre, *Les graffites grecs du Memnonion d'Abydos* (Nancy 1919), and discussion by Françoise Dunand, "La consultation oraculaire en Égypte tardive: L'oracle de Bès à Abydos," *Oracles et prophéties dans l'antiquité*, ed. by Jean-Georges Heintz (Paris 1997), 65–84; Apa Moses's exorcism described in the *Life of Moses of Abydos*, ed. by Walter Till, *Koptische Heiligen- und Martyrerlegenden*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 108 (Rome 1936), 46–81, with discussion by Lászlo Kákosy, "Der Gott Bes in einer koptischen Legende," *Acta antiqua academiae scientiarum Hungaricae* 14 (1966):185–96. On the cult of Bes in Roman Egypt see Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, §§ 3.5.2 and 4.3.2.

[54] Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity*, chaps. 3–4; "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), 103–52; *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge 1995), chap. 3. See also Françoise Dunand, "Miracles et guérisons en Égypte tardive," *Mélanges Étienne Bernand*, ed. by Nicole Fick and Jean-Claude Carrière (Paris 1991), 235–50, esp. 247–50, who usefully puts the thaumaturgy of desert saints in the context of other Egyptian cults of the Roman period, and Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, §§ 4.4.2 and 7.1.

[55] *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 1.11, 16, 28.

played administrative roles for circumscribed regions, resolving village disputes, healing supplicants, and issuing talismans entirely within the regional idiom.[56]

Such "living" or charismatic pilgrimage cults have played a distinctive role in the Christianization of cultures throughout history, especially in periods of transition or disintegration. In such circumstances, John Eade and Michael Sallnow have remarked,

> ... possessed individuals are able to respond more effectively to changing needs and events than are static shrines embedded in the landscape—particularly when, as in this case [of Andean religion] there were no longer any priests to interpret their oracular pronouncements.[57]

Such holy men and women were usually prophetic figures who could critique local religion and compete with other regional cults from the vantage of a more embracing or global ideology. Their principal ritual idiom consisted of thaumaturgy (and especially exorcism). They emphasized believers' *pilgrimage* to their new regional shrines, an overland trek away from local religious authorities. In all these aspects the holy person became the seed of religious transformation in the late antique and early medieval worlds, many parts of modern Africa, and even contemporary Sri Lanka.[58]

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[56] See, e.g., Pi-Amoun in Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 31, Apa Aaron in Paphnutius, *History of the Monks of Upper Egypt* 99–138 (tr. Tim Vivian, CS 140, 121–40), Bishop Pisentius (ed./tr. E.A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* [London 1913; repr. New York 1977], 75–127, 258–334), and diverse hermits discussed by Shenoute (Tito Orlandi, "A Catechesis Against Apocryphal Texts by Shenute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi," *HTR* 75 [1982]:90). See also Jean Doresse, "Saints coptes de Haute-Égypte," *Journal asiatique* 236 (1948):247–70, and H.E. Winlock and W.E. Crum, "Theban Hermits and Their Life," *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes* 1 (New York 1926), 164, 169.

[57] Eade and Sallnow, "Introduction," *Contesting the Sacred*, 7.

[58] Useful comparative examples in Alison Redmayne, "Chikanga: An African Diviner with an International Reputation," *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations*, ASAM 9, ed. by Mary Douglas (London 1970), 103–28; Kingsley Garbett, "Disparate Regional Cults and a Unitary Ritual Field in Zimbabwe," *Regional Cults*, 55–92, esp. 71–78, 87–91; Elizabeth Colson, "A Continuing Dialogue: Prophets and Local Shrines among the Tonga of Zambia," *Regional Cults*, 119–39; Terence Ranger, "The Local and the Global in Southern African Religious History," *Conversion to Christianity*, ed. by Robert W. Hefner, (Berkeley 1993), 65–98; Douglas H. Johnson, *Nuer Prophets: A History of Prophecy from the Upper Nile in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford 1994); David Sperling, "The Frontiers of Prophecy: Healing, the Cosmos, and Islam on the East African Coast in the Nineteenth Century," *Revealing Prophets*, ed. by David M. Anderson and Douglas H. Johnson (London 1995), 83–101; and Richard L. Stirrat, "Place and Person in Sinhala Catholic Pilgrimage," *Contesting the Sacred*, 122–36.

Coptic Christians, of course, had not only an array of such desert prophets from which to choose their sacred destinations, but also shrines of saints' and martyrs' corpses and relics, sites of mythical import (like the Holy Family's route), and the persisting holiness of archaic cult complexes like Philae, Menouthis, and Dendara, maintained through the installation of churches.[59] Still, the hermits and charismatic monks retained an abiding importance in Coptic Christianity. It is in their high profiles in Coptic folk and monastic culture that we can study the tensions and shifts between local, regional, and trans-regional authority that produced a Coptic sacred geography.

Like the apparition in medieval Spain, the holy man in his self-designated shrine is altogether an autochthonous phenomenon. Generally a local figure proficient in the local idiom of sacred power, he stands in a peripheral position to those *centralizing* forces in the new religion that he espouses, and thus he can be critical of those forces. Nor can the forces of centralization, or of society more generally, easily domesticate the holy person's charisma before his death.[60] Thus the holy person could stand in real tension with ecclesiastical and imperial centers, whose leaders then had to rely on easily importable (and invented) relics to gain sacred authority for a church, city, institution, or teaching.

However, the "invention" of relics—their discovery, transportation to a village, and ensconcement in a shrine—could itself be an act of local religious self-determination. Both Athanasius and Shenoute describe the discovery and collection of martyrs' bones as a village endeavor, an attempt to mediate creatively between local tradition and the theological symbolism of the great tradition.[61] What then was the ecclesiastically-minded Christian leader to do to avoid the disintegration of Christianity into parochial enclaves? One finds the complete rejection of relics and tombs only rarely as a solution. A more common response was the promotion of martyr-cults of a more pan-Christian character, insinuating into the Egyptian landscape sacred shrines of *scriptural* (rather than Egyptian) tradition. The installation of the foreign Thecla cult along the route to the Egyptian Menas cult (as Stephan Davis argues) is one such example, and the promotion of shrines to St. Mark in Alexandria and the Holy Family would be another. In Alexandria a succession of archbishops attempt the city's sanctification by erecting shrines to Elisha and John the Baptist, the Three Young Men from the Book of Daniel, and—if the late antique Christian *Lives of the Prophets* are to be believed—the relics of the prophet Jeremiah.[62]

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[59] See Michel Jullien, "Le culte chrétien dans les temples de l'antique Égypte," *Études* 92 (1902):237–53.

[60] See esp. Stirrat, "Place and Person in Sinhala Catholic Pilgrimage."

[61] On Athanasius, see David Brakke's article in this volume. On Shenoute, see L.-Th. Lefort, "La chasse aux reliques des martyrs en Égypte au IV^{e} siècle," *La nouvelle Clio* 6 (1954):225–30; Theofried Baumeister, *Martyr Invictus: Der Martyrer als Sinnbild der Erlösung in der Legende und im Kult der frühen koptischen Kirche*, Forschungen zur Volkskunde 46 (Münster 1972), esp. chap. 2; and in general Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient*, 58.

But how does one indigenize a foreign relic or saint and give it central value in "our" landscape? Recognition by a native prophet offered one solution. Thus, into the church's attempt to establish more "scripturally-correct" martyria in the main cities of the empire were drawn the holy men themselves, at least through the medium of their hagiographies. Makarios of Tkow, for example, was a rural bishop of the sixth century with tremendous powers to call down the blessings and wrath of heaven. His hagiographer "Dioscorus" claimed a vision in which Makarios's body was promised a place in the Alexandrian shrine of John the Baptist and Elisha. This combination of Christian heroes' relics with those of a native prophet would have given the Alexandrian shrine some native legitimacy (and simultaneously define Makarios's own charisma in lineage with two particularly revered scriptural heroes). When the time came, however, the Alexandrian bishop objected: "'What are you doing with this unclean Egyptian, burying him in the sanctuary of the holy men?'," he is reputed to have said in Makarios's *Panegyric*. Immediately the bishop was struck dead with lightning, a scene that doubtless afforded Coptic audiences some satisfaction that the Lord works as actively for the promotion of native holy men as he does for the unification of Christian belief. So Makarios's relics were installed, and a "scriptural" shrine became Egyptian as well.[63]

In the early fifth century, Archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria sought to build a shrine to Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, the Three Young Men of the Book of Daniel. However, he could not extract their actual relics from Ctesiphon in Babylonia. Thus he gained the assistance of John the Little, holy man of the monastic center of Scetis, in guaranteeing the saints' supernatural presence. Like a shaman, John flew off in a dream journey to their main shrine in Babylonia, where he met the saints in person and secured their promise of an annual visit to the Alexandrian shrine, with healings to be performed at that time. A subsequent encomium on these saints attributed to Theophilus's successor, Cyril, describes their active presence in the shrine, expelling demons, curing ailments, and converting heathens.[64]

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[62] I use the revised theory of the text's origins advanced in David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine: Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets*, SVTP 11 (Leiden 1995).

[63] *Panegyric of Makarios of Tkow* 6.1–3; 16.1, ed. and tr. D.W. Johnson, CSCO 415–16, Scriptores coptici 41–42 (Louvain 1980).

These stories reflect urban religion above all. They define the holiness of a city, Alexandria, that seeks international status and Christian authority but which at the same time sits in a landscape of popular local shrines. The stories reflect that quintessential late antique and medieval endeavor to consecrate and protect one's city through the importation of relics. This endeavor involved wholely different motivations, however, from the effort to implant Christianity in the countryside. Cities and their religious patrons are centralizing and ecumenical entities that inevitably require the importation of holy things and places from the periphery or from other centers. It is a matter of degree, to be sure, but a culture woven into its landscape, integrated through regional and local shrines, does not usually require the additional *sacra* that a city needs to make it a cosmic center. The phenomenon of holy men serving the relic-collections in Alexandria may reflect a situation observed elsewhere in Christianizing cultures, when political competition or disaster create religious instability. Such anxious times often require the discovery of and appeal to a supernatural patron imported from the periphery, to authenticate an urban shrine or to provide his very bones.[65]

IV. *Defining the Christianity of Pilgrimage Shrines*

How "Christian" is the Christian pilgrimage shrine, and how should one interpret priests', bishops', and reformers' criticisms throughout history that certain shrines exhibit base, magical, or even "pagan" piety? One of the virtues of charting shrines in terms of their catchment areas and structural relationship to society is that a shrine's ideological affiliation—its theological claims or its adherence to some greater orthodoxy—is removed, at least for the moment, from scholarly focus. For what, indeed, determines a shrine's ideology? A regional shrine serving a wide population might emphasize a "high god" in contrast to a local shrine that emphasizes a particular local protector-spirit. Thus a shrine's catchment area itself can determine the scope and authority of its deity. The rise, fall, and transmutations of such cults in turn reflect social and political realities more than the nuances of belief system. The continuity of the Philae Isis-cult into the sixth century, for example, owes more to the allegiance of several distinct cultures frequenting the region of the first cataract than to priests' proclamations of Isis and her mythology.[66]

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[64] John the Little: Zacharias of Sakha, *Life of St. John the Little* 75, tr. by Maged S. Mikhail and Tim Vivian, *Coptic Church Review* 18, 1–2 (1997):47–50. Encomium of Cyril: ed. Henri De Vis, *Homélies coptes de la Vaticane II*, Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte 6 (Louvain 1990), 158–202. The encomium describes the Youths' miraculous appearance *incognito* at the construction of the shrine.

[65] See Peter Brown, "The Holy Man in Late Antiquity," 132–34, and above, p. 21, on the translation of Simeon the Stylite's relics. Compare Harrington, "Mother of Death, Mother of Rebirth," 45–46, on the adoption of the Virgin of Guadelupe to protect against plague, and Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*, 75–78, on the adoption of rural Christ-images to repel earthquakes.

However, in the history of Christianization, in which the establishment of pilgrimage cults played such an important role, the historian repeatedly finds a whole complex of forces and tensions defining the very nature of Christianity, its cosmology, its institutional hierarchy and priestly charisma, its iconography, and the application of its teachings. To the degree that Christianity projects an institutional image of unity, orthodoxy, and global authority—and sustains that image with texts, hierarchy, geographical centers, and concern for orthodoxy—it should be regarded as a "great tradition" in Redfield's sense, that is, a heuristic term for a *tendency* within a supra-local religion.[67] And to the degree that *local* traditions, culture, and sacred geography exert themselves upon and through the idioms and symbols of that great tradition, we may speak of them (equally heuristically) as "little traditions." Within these two *ideal* poles moves the religion as lived—in this case, the world of the pilgrimage shrine and its devotees.

Still, pilgrimage cults do not reflect merely a harmonious dialectic of traditions. There are some real countervailing tensions at play in the definition of religion at a shrine. On the one hand there are localizing forces, a proclivity borne of human need and collective experience to emphasize the immanent and concrete and to put high values on the immediate accessibility of supernatural power and on the places and lore that defines the community in time and space. On the other hand, there are generalizing forces that literate and institutional bodies exert on local supernatural powers to reject, change, or elevate them to a broader orthodox status. As such, those powers become available solely through the mediation of the institutional hierarchy. This latter tendency may be compared to the "sanskritization" of Hindu local deities, which become generalized and powerful through the creative activity of literate authorities.[68]

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[66] See Rutherford in this volume.

[67] On this ideology of a greater Christianity, united and authoritative, presented in late antique Christian literature and preaching, see Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley 1991).

It is in pilgrimage cults that this dialectic—and often outright tension—between local and global tendencies can become particularly acute. The Islamic *Hajj*, for example, has always provided the vast diversity of local and regional Islams a unifying, global dimension, both in the experience of real Meccan pilgrims, or *hajji*, and in the imaginations of their less-privileged neighbors. Through the participation and subsequent influence of local *hajji*, people learn what is "proper" Islam, what practices define the religion as a whole as distinct from the religious practices distinctive of local cultures. To be sure, pilgrims to Mecca do not entirely depart their regional identities upon reaching Mecca. In this sense, a homogeneous "great" Islam remains but an ideal even in this most centralizing of pilgrimages. Yet for local Muslims in Africa and Asia the very image of a center beyond one's own sacred environment exerts a symbolic pull that is experienced in many aspects of religious life. (And *hajji* inevitably bring back to their regions the ideological and religious influences they have encountered in that center.)[69]

Similar polarities between "great" and local dimensions arise in Latin American Christianity. Communities claiming apparitions of

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[68] See Marriott, "Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization." Local Marian devotion has similar characteristics: see Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain.*

[69] See James Steel Thayer, "Pilgrimage and Its Influence on West African Islam," *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage,* 169–87; Mariane Ferme, "What 'Alhaji Airplane' Saw in Mecca and what happened when he came home: Ritual Transformation in a Mende community (Sierra Leone)," *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis,* ed. by Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw (London and New York 1994), 27–44; and for a contemporary description of local identity preserved through the Hajj, see John Chernoff (and Alhaji Ibrahim Abdulai), "The Pilgrimage to Mecca: An Excerpt from *A Drummer's Testament,*" *The Chicago Review* 34, 3 (1984):68–93.

Mary or Christ strive to define those apparitions in terms of indigenous symbols, indigenous needs for supernatural efficacy, realities of the local environment and economy, and even older mythological traditions, and these efforts are often in outright tension with institutional efforts to assimilate the apparitions to orthodox constructions of Mary or Christ. The same popular devotion to a local Mary or Christ, Sallnow observes, might express to participants the triumph of a local divinity in Marian guise; while to foreign ecclesiarchs it would signify the peoples' conversion to the mother of the true God. Pilgrims may be well aware that what they visit is at odds with ecclesiastical orthodoxy but defend its sanctity nonetheless.[70]

The example of Saut d'Eau, the major apparition site and pilgrimage center for the Virgin Mary in Haiti, shows how the transformation of an indigenous holy site into a major Catholic shrine occurs not only through the active interests of the official church but also through a clustering of indigenous spirits (in Haiti, *loa*) at that same center. The Virgin Mary and the great *voudoun* serpent Damballah, as well as other *loa*s besides, all share the same holy ground, festivals, devotees, and even rituals. In this way, the pilgrims' goal becomes sacred—that is, in the Eliadean sense, as a place where supernatural and natural worlds merge—according to several distinct traditions: Catholic, *voudoun*, and the multiple local versions of *voudoun*. Traditional ritual experts lend central authority to Saut d'Eau by sending clients there on pilgrimage, thereby securing the holiness of the site for local *voudoun* traditions and not simply the "great tradition" of Catholicism. To be sure, the pilgrimage center and its folklore are steeped in reverence for Mary herself and for the national Catholic identity her cult offers to Haitians. Nevertheless, in its effect of drawing people on pilgrimage *away from* economic centers *to* the rural site of apparition and of encompassing a landscape of multiple—and for Catholic priests, mutually exclusive—deities, Saut d'Eau twice resists appropriation by the Church.[71]

The definition of Christianity at the pilgrimage shrine becomes the more complex as pilgrims come not as generic Christians—or even "national" Christians—but as representatives of specific regions or villages. The pilgrimage festival itself becomes an opportunity to celebrate distinctiveness, not cosmic homogeneity.[72] In such ways the history of a pilgrimage cult is invariably a protracted struggle over the definition and nature of a holy site's power, and under what aegis the supplicant should invoke it.

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[70] See Sallnow, "Pilgrimage and Cultural Fracture in the Andes," 149–50; Harrington, "Mother of Death, Mother of Rebirth."

[71] See Michel S. Laguerre, *Voodoo and Politics in Haiti* (New York 1989), chap. 6. On the clustering of traditions in ritual centers cf. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions*, SJLA 23 (Leiden 1978), 112–19, on Jerusalem. The tradition of the healing bath by the Sheep's Gate in Jerusalem (Jn. 5:2–9) may be a witness to the same multiplication of spirits at a pilgrimage site.

Egypt experienced some of these tensions at least as early as the beginnings of Hellenism, when priestly assertions of a god's global significance—Amun of Thebes, Isis of Philae and Canopus, Mandulis of Talmis, even the crocodile-god Sobek of the Fayyum—through iconographic, literary, and even cultic media like oracles gave a broader dimension of authority to traditionally circumscribed regional cults.[73] One can imagine that this broader dimension of authority would have appealed especially to those Alexandrians and other city-dwellers who had come to value gods' ecumenical scopes over their parochial domains.

Since promotions of gods in any vein were the work of the priesthoods, and since most priests gained authority from that ecumenical scope that Hellenism provided, it is rare to find evidence of parochial *rejections* of Hellenism. One finds, to be sure, a kind of insistence on gods' regional distinctions: Sobek remains a crocodile even when Hellenized as Souchos;[74] the cobra goddess Renenoutet retains her coils even when molded in Greek form as (Isis-) Thermouthis;[75] Isis keeps her discrete regional identities—"of Philae," "of Pharos," Sasypsis, Nepherses, Nephremmis.[76] But this parochialism too reflected priestly interests, often of smaller temples. Throughout Egypt, then, temples and their priesthoods were making lively use of Greek language, names, iconography to promote local gods as global *and* to highlight the unique powers of the local cult. In this priestly context one literate great tradition, Hellenism, permeated another one, the temple scriptorium, which then maintained local traditions in creative synthesis with ancient royal traditions and with the broad idiom of Greek culture.

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[72] Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*, chap. 7, and *idem*, "Pilgrimage and Cultural Fracture in the Andes," 146–48. Cf. Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes," 211–22, on Mexican *gremio.*

[73] On the globalization of the Isis-cult through various media see Vera Frederika Vanderlip, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis*, ASP 12 (Toronto 1972); and more general discussions by R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World* (Ithaca 1971), chap. 8, and Jonathan Z. Smith, "Native Cults in the Hellenistic Period," *HR* 11 (1971):236–49. On the globalization of the local god Mandulis of Talmis (Kalabsha) see Nock, "A Vision of Mandulis Aion."

[74] Although compare Jan Quaegebeur, "Cultes égyptiens et grecs en Égypte hellénistique: L'exploitation des sources," *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, Studia Hellenistica 27, ed. by E. Van 't Dack, P. Van Dessel, and W. Van Gucht (Louvain 1983), 313–16, on a local *interpretatio aegyptiaca* of the Roman Dioscuri as twin forms of Sobek.

[75] See Françoise Dunand, *Religion populaire en Égypte romaine*, EPRO 77 (Leiden 1979), 63–65, figs. 24–31.

[76] Isis of Pharos and of Philae: IGPhilae 168 (ed. Étienne Bernand, *Les inscrip-*

One does not find such synthesis or tolerance of local diversity, nor such an abstract sense of "great tradition," in early Christian missions. Christian evangelists' claim that their system had unique authority, with a single book, single ideology, single "true church," polarized a correct piety toward *heavenly* powers against a whole world of *demonic* practices and beliefs.[77] Such attitudes motivated a vicious campaign of destruction: temples, shrines, priests, and even traditional devotees fell to the "black-robed tribes," as Libanius puts it.[78] But on a more subtle level, the consuming idea of *orthodoxy* implicit in this system seems to have contributed to the idea of a great tradition that was self-consciously distinct from local religion. There was now a language for making that distinction and for judging the merits of particular practices and beliefs maintained under the aegis of the church.

And so, with the rapid planting of Christian martyria and pilgrimage cults in the fourth century, a complex of tensions and debates arose around the definition of Christianity itself. Was this new religion, *as it appeared to people* through martyria, relics, and pilgrimage cults, a religion substantially of miracle, healing, and efficacious substance enshrined and transmitted, or was it a religion of transcendent powers, scripture, ecclesiarchy, and orthodoxy? What middle ground could be forged, and who should do the forging?

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tions grecques et latines de Philae 1–2 [Paris 1969]); Isis Sasypsis: IGFayyum 2.121, 123, 130 (ed. Étienne Bernand, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques du Fayoum* 2, Bibliothèque d'étude 79 [Cairo 1981]); Isis Nepherses/Isis Nephremmis: IGFayyum 1.76 (ed. idem, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques du Fayoum* 1 [Leiden 1975]). See Letronne, cited in Bernand, *Le delta égyptien d'après les textes grecs*, 298–99, on implications of local designators for Isis, and further on local Isises: Annie Forgeau, "Prêtres isiaques: Essai d'anthropologie religieuse," *BIFAO* 84 (1984):155–87. In general see Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, § 3.2.

[77] See Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire, AD 100–400* (New Haven and London 1984), 17–21, and Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, § 7.2.

[78] Libanius, *Epistle* 30:8–9.

Examples of this negotiation between local and ecclesiastical traditions are manifold. On the one hand, a cult like that of Cyrus and John at Menouthis, replacing the healing cult of Isis in the same town, proffered a Christianity of incubation, healing, and the immediate intervention of supernatural powers like the martyrs Cyrus and John.[79] One would likewise assume the deeply parochial character of *devotion* in any of the chapels installed in the precincts of major Egyptian temples—Philae, Karnak, Dendara, Abydos. Of course, local ecclesiastical administrators of such cults might easily justify their orthodoxy by composing sermons and miracle-collections steeped in biblical language and typology.[80]

But there were many authorities who simply disliked the whole texture of the local Christianities developing in Egypt and the wider Mediterranean world. Thus, we see in David Brakke's article an Athanasius struggling in sermon and letter to redirect piety towards a transcendent Christ-, Bible-, and Church-centered religion and away from the glowing bodies of martyrs. In the following century, Abbot Shenoute is even more vivid in his complaints about local Christianity:

> In the moments of the suffering, ... [there are some who,] when they fall into poverty or become ill—or indeed other temptations—abandon God and have recourse to enchanters or oracles or ... other deceptive things: just as I myself have seen—the snake's head bound to the hand of some, and another with the crocodile tooth bound to an arm, another with fox claws bound to his legs: especially as there was a magistrate who told the latter that he was wise to do so. Indeed, when I reproachfully asked him whether it was the fox claws that would heal him, he said: "It was a great monk who gave me them saying, Bind them to you, and you will recover."[81]

In the same way an anonymous Coptic homily from about the same period lambasts those who visit "demons ... deluding people as healing cults." These same people, the homily proceeds to describe,

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[79] See especially Pierre Maraval, "Fonction pédagogique de la littérature hagiographique d'un lieu de pèlerinage: l'exemple des Miracles de Cyr et Jean," *Hagiographie, Cultures, et Sociétés, IV^{e}–XII^{e} siècles* (Paris 1981), 383–97.

[80] See Shenoute's sermon on the conversion of a native temple to Christian chapel, in Dwight W. Young, "A Monastic Invective against Egyptian Hieroglyphs," *Studies Presented to Hans Jakob Polotsky*, ed. by Dwight W. Young (Beacon Hill, MA 1981), 348–60.

[81] Paris copte 129^{12} 66 + DS, p. 59, tr. Orlandi, "Catechesis Against Apocryphal Texts," 90.

> ... pour all over themselves water with incantations (spoken over it), and they break their clay pots claiming it repels the evil eye. Some tie amulets on their children, hand-crafted by men—those (men) who provide a place for the dwelling of demons—while others annoint themselves with oil that is evil and incantations and such things that they tie on their heads and necks.[82]

Those who engage in such protective rites are not traditional adherents of the old Egyptian temples, for the authors would certainly make "paganism" an issue if it were so. They were, rather, Christians in the local Coptic sense—seeking the benefits of shrine and holy man. The passages thus reflect a collision of religious worlds, their priorities, their centers, their constructions of the sacred. For such authors, the concrete media and private rites of local religion reeked of the very heathenism they were themselves extirpating from the landscape. These tensions did not, of course, begin only in the fourth century. One can see their roots in earlier texts: the *Apocalypse of Elijah*'s prophetic image (third century) of an Egypt sanctified by the bodies of saints, in contrast to the *Epistula Apostolorum*'s insistence (II/III-cent.) that a creed based in gospel events should form the distinguishing *sacra* of Christianity.[83]

It would be incorrect to translate these tensions into "popular" versus "high" religion.[84] The dynamics here are clearly local versus institutional and indigenizing versus scripturalizing *tendencies*. As Athanasius and Shenoute describe, the discovery and enthusiastic response to relics were village phenomena and functioned to define a locally or regionally accessible Christianity. At the same time, the ecclesiastical elevation and appropriation of local saint-cults like those of Simeon Stylites, Menas, Thekla, Cyrus and John, and others in late antique and medieval Christianity were major institutional activities, affecting the erection of churches, the dissemination of relics, the craft of reliquaries, and the development of hagiography as institutional literature.[85] Athanasius's own treatment of the holy man Antony of the desert, as "corrected" as it is towards Athanasius's own agenda, represents the bishop's attempt to draw upon this world of local holy men, to develop a theology of their holiness, even while denying their bones' availability or efficacy.[86]

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[82] Ps-Athanasius, Homily on Virgin, ed. L.-Th. Lefort, "L'homélie de S. Athanase des papyrus de Turin," *Le muséon* 71 (1958):35–36 (ms. pp. 92, 95).

[83] See Frankfurter, "The Cult of the Martyrs in Egypt before Constantine." On the *Epistula Apostolorum* see C. Detlef, G. Müller's introduction and translation in Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha* 1 (Cambridge and Louisville 1991), 249–84.

[84] See Peter Brown's instructive essay on the problem of "popular religion," in *Cult of the Saints*, 11–22.

[85] P. Force describes a cult of St. Stephen in Uzali (Tunisia) that was expertly

If the great tradition—the ecclesiastical world and its scribal and centralizing enterprises—thus resolved tensions with local traditions by appropriating them, local cultures also managed a creative rapprochement: the *folklore of miracle*, often inscribed and edited as hagiography, and the idiosyncratic *ritual traditions* that often distinguished shrines from each other.

The folklore of apparition in Latin America repeatedly emphasizes the native, invariably peasant, identity of the primary witness to the miraculous image or place: Juan Diego who beheld the Virgin of Guadalupe in his cloak and an Indian shepherd boy who danced with the Christ of Qoyllur Rit'i.[87] William Christian describes the function of such stories in early modern Spain:

> In the process of working out a site for the image, or a proof of the apparition, a relationship between the saint and the community is in formation, a bond that will be all the more secure for the doubts and the mistakes of the people. In these situations the saint, usually Mary, has to make an effort so that she may eventually be of service to the community. The moral is that the saint, Mary, has chosen them; her patronage and advocacy was something that was meant to be.[88]

So also the vital martyrs of Egyptian Christianity were "our" kinsmen, natives of particular villages, persecuted by foreign imperial forces, tried and tortured in "these" towns along the Nile, and their bones discovered by "our people." Such storytelling is very much the process by which a new ideology of religious power and identity is assimilated, situated in the landscape, recognizable to "us." And the written

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administered by ecclesiastical authorities, their miracle records produced as biblical exegesis ("La spiritualité des miracles de Saint Étienne," *Studia Patristica* 30 [1997]: 183–90). On this cult and Augustine of Hippo's response to it, see also Victor Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques en afrique chrétienne aux premiers siècles*, TH 55 (Paris 1980), 245–79.

[86] Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, esp. chap. 90. See Michael A. Williams, "The *Life of Antony* and the Domestication of Charismatic Wisdom," *Charisma and Sacred Biography*, JAAR Thematic Studies 48, 3–4, ed. by M.A. Williams (Chico, CA 1982), 23–45, and David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford 1995), chap. 4, esp. 248–53, and essay in this volume.

[87] These examples and others are discussed throughout Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes*, chaps. 3–4, and Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, chap. 2.

[88] Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, 82.

versions of these legends served the same intermediary function for the world of the literate. A martyr might be disengaged from his native locale and his relics and supernatural presence reestablished hundreds of miles away, all through careful hagiography. Or an unusual icon or ritual practice distinctive to a martyr's cult might be warranted through the same legend, as a tradition the saint himself had introduced.[89]

Ritual practices themselves, whether innovation or continuation from pre-Christian religion, provide a medium for the maintenance of local traditions within the guise of a great tradition. Whether or not devotees understood precisely the ideology for which St. Colluthus or St. Philoxenus had triumphantly died, they would recognize the oracles that these saints were providing in the sixth century. Their "ticket-oracles" answered everyday questions for the supplicant in the same way that Sobek, god of the Fayyum, had responded in the Ptolemaic and early Roman periods. Notwithstanding the official dominance of Christianity and martyrology at the time of the Colluthus cult, the latter's services included the same scribal intermediaries, the same formulae for the tickets, and the same efficacy imputed to the ticket chosen by the saint. Indeed, Lucia Papini's materials in this volume, fragments of a divination *text* held in the shrine's library, suggest that the very sense of text and writing at the shrine of St. Colluthus served the particularities of the oracle cult.

Elsewhere one finds other examples of pilgrimage shrine rites and functions carried over from native traditions into Christian guise: incubation and healing by dreams were the central rites at Menouthis and Abû Mînâ, and most shrines distributed water, oil, and dust charged with the contagious powers of the relic.[90] The point is not the incidental character of Christianity, for pilgrims considered their devotions altogether Christian, but rather *the native rite as point of synthesis between great and little traditions*, scriptural religion and native, practice-based worldview. The very efficacy of the Christian cosmos and its supernatural characters becomes manifest through the gestures, places, and dramas of indigenous tradition.

Even more than points of synthesis, these archaic pilgrims' rites (and the legends as well) signal an indigenous culture's *appropriation* of the great tradition, a *revitalization* of cultural perceptions of sacred geography, divine accessibility, and the procedures and dramas that facilitated efficacy. The new, official idiom for the supernatural "proves" traditional conceptions of sacred geography and the efficacy of certain rites.[91] Indeed, it is precisely the value of Christianity (and other religions in similar positions) to function as a means for revitalization. Thus it is not so much Christianity *per se* that will determine the character of religion in a region as a regional culture's particular interest in appropriating Christianity as an idiom.

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[89] See Baumeister, *Martyr invictus*, 63–86, 91–148.
[90] See esp. Baumeister, *Martyr invictus*, 63–73.

How striking, then, that *exorcism* should figure so prominently when Christianity is establishing itself in a region. First- and second-century narrative sources (especially the lives of desert hermits) mark exorcism as the chief performative mode in which this religion distinguished itself publicly from other religions—although within a cosmology of pervasive demons that all would recognize.[92] Athanasius bears witness to exorcisms at martyrs' shrines. Thus the martyr would exhibit his power over the unconverted, even wrestling the demons into oracular pronouncements.

In a world of tremendous thaumaturgical competition, Christianity found a niche for itself in exorcism, as it has done since. In fact, historically, exorcism often functions in transitional cultures as a performative idiom to articulate, in the radical form of dualistic drama, new cosmologies, new points of supernatural power. Prophets in modern East Africa might employ witch-cleansing or exorcism to establish their powers as surpassing the world of local spirits—even opposing that world in some circumstances. In contemporary Sri Lanka, Richard Stirrat has observed, charismatic priests have successfully staged mass exorcisms to dramatize Christianity's efficacy in a cosmos swarming with spirits (traditionally under the aegis of Theravada Buddhism).[93]

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[91] See Sallnow, "Pilgrimage and Cultural Fracture in the Andes," 149, and for late antique Christianization, Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred* 64–68.

[92] See Peter Brown, "The Holy Man in Late Antiquity," 123–26; MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, 17–19, 27–29, 99–100, 110–13; Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York 1987), 326–30; Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, § 7.2.

[93] See, e.g., Redmayne, "Chikanga: An African Diviner"; Garbett, "Disparate Regional Cults," 70–71; and Birgit Meyer, "Beyond Syncretism: Translation and Diabolization in the Appropriation of Protestantism in Africa," *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 45–68. On Sri Lanka see Richard Stirrat, "Place and Person in Sinhala Catholic Pilgrimage"; "Demonic Possession in Roman Catholic Sri Lanka," *Anthropological Research* 33 (1977):133–57; and *Power and Religiosity in a Post-Colonial Setting* (Cambridge 1992), esp. chaps. 5 and 7. Note also comparative remarks on exorcism by I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (2nd ed.; London and New York 1989), 116–17.

Whether for its polarizing clarity in a world of ambiguous spiritual forces or the collective, enthusiastic character of its drama, exorcism provided the important germinal stage for the success of Christian cults, both holy men and martyrs' relics, in the Egyptian Christian world. And yet the Christianity manifest in a local exorcistic cult was still a far cry from the scripturalist Christianity promoted by urban bishops.

V. *Pilgrimage in the Genesis of Egyptian Christianity*

If exorcism can function so centrally in the establishment of new regional cults (or trans-regional ideologies like Christianity), then we must abandon the assumption that new religions appear first as otherworldly, charismatic systems, only later to settle down as magical cults.[94]

The earliest textual witnesses to Egyptian Christianity do reflect a thought-world with apocalyptic and gnostic tendencies—what one might call transcendent, delocalized, or rebellious piety. Examples would include the various esoteric interpretations of Jewish scripture practiced in Alexandria, the quasi-mystical dicta of imported Syrian texts like *Thomas* and John, an incipient millenialism in the reception of the Book of Revelation and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and an elite intellectualism in the popularity of the *Shepherd of Hermas* and in the circles of Clement and Origen.[95] In the manifold links between this Christian intellectualism and the native priestly school designated Hermeticism there emerges evidence of a concerted effort among religious thinkers of all persuasion to "lift" traditional piety from its temple focus toward transcendent cosmic forces (a distinctly Hellenistic notion).[96] Even that archetypal hermit Antony appears by his letters more of a philosopher than a simple dispenser of amulets and warnings.[97] How then does the development of martyr-cults as a principal mode of Egyptian Christianization fit into this portrait of earliest Christianity? Does it reflect some "Jewish" or rural "pagan" distortion of the urban fathers' spiritual ideas?[98]

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[94] The major exposition of this process is Max Weber's *Sociology of Religion*, esp. chap. 5. Compare Jonathan Z. Smith's terms "locative"—defining of place and boundary—and "utopian"—transgressive of place, boundary, and traditional cosmos—for basic religious ideologies (*Map Is Not Territory*, *passim*). Although Smith views the foundations of the Jesus movement as generally locative in perspective (*Drudgery Divine: On the Commparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* [Chicago 1990], chap. 4), his earlier use of "utopian" would apply to most of the earliest forms of Egyptian Christianity (*Map*, esp. 131–46).

[95] See Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. by Robert Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia 1971), chap. 2; Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*; David Frankfurter, "Legacy of the Jewish Apocalypse," 142–70, and *Elijah in Upper Egypt* (Minneapolis 1993), chaps. 9–10.

[96] See in general Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: An Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge 1986), with Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, chap. 7, and "Native Cults in the Hellenistic Period."

Posed in this way, the question itself is most certainly wrong. The assumption of incongruity—between ideological otherworldliness and the concrete expectations of the martyr-cult—could only arise from early Protestant sensibilities that would juxtapose a "spirituality," as primary and superior, and a "magic," as secondary and inferior.[99] In fact, cross-cultural studies show the concrete, thaumaturgical element to be deeply engrained in new religious systems, even in their most otherworldly, millennialist manifestations. Exorcism and healing, as powers inherent in the prophet's charisma, themselves offer dramatic demonstrations of a new religion's reality or the imminence of a new cosmic order.[100] Antony, that most educated of hermits (by Samuel Rubenson's reckoning), had a special interest in the character of demons, a theme that his hagiographer promotes as well.[101]

Even apart from such holy men and prophets, it is not difficult to link the apocalyptic and gnostic interests evident in the early Christian texts with a practical ritual world—a thaumaturgy—in line with the ritual culture of the Coptic pilgrimage cult. One has only to look at the earliest Christian uses of scripture that go beyond mere "informative" functions: investment in protective "seals" for the heavenly ascent and cosmic combat of the righteous, the preparation of scripture fragments as talismans, and the composition, collection, and exchange of ritual spells among literate Christians.[102] In these practices early Egyptian Christians employed a "charismatic literacy" typical of scriptural religions. Sacred written materials are often viewed as singularly efficacious in the broad thaumaturgical market of popular culture.[103] By such ritual means, Christian evangelists from at least the second century CE could invoke and transmit the supernatural powers described in Christian cosmology even while that cosmology remained otherworldly—or set off in the imminent future.

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[97] Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (Minneapolis 1995).

[98] Martyrial pilgrimage and amulet cults have generally been ascribed to Greco-Roman hero traditions or other types of local "paganism" (as opposed to Christianity): cf. Marcel Simon, "Les pèlerinages dans l'antiquité chrétienne," *Les pèlerinages de l'antiquité biblique et classique à l'occident médiéval*, Études d'histoire des religions 1 (Paris 1973), 99, 104–8. Simple veneration of martyrs is often ascribed to Jewish popular religion: see esp. Willy Rordorf, "Aux origines du culte des martyrs," *Liturgie, foi, et vie des premiers chrétiens: Études patristiques*, Théologie historique 75 (Paris 1986), 363–79, and "La commémoration des martyrs dans le christianisme des premiers siècles," *La commémoration*, Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes-études, section des sciences religieuses 91, ed. by Philippe Gignoux (Louvain 1988), 175–78, although cf. Kerkeslager in this volume.

[99] The polarity is described, with a lamentable reification of the terminology, by Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York 1971).

[100] On thaumaturgical ritual and claims in new religious movements see Bryan R. Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium* (New York 1973). Weber also mentions the thaumaturgical character of the prophet, but only as an outward trapping that the prophet denies or transcends (*Sociology of Religion*, tr. Ephraim Fischoff [Boston 1963], 47, 78).

[101] Antony, *Ep.* 6, tr. Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 216–24, with discussion 139–40; cf. Norman H. Baynes, "St. Antony and the Demons," *JEA* 40 (1954):7–10.

Hence, those essential characteristics of the pilgrimage cult (and indeed of any religion assimilated to native culture)—the sense that the cosmology describes powers accessible for human needs, rituals for the transmission of those powers, and a mapping of that cosmology and ritual repertoire upon the landscape—actually represented no departure from or secondary development upon some original charismatic transcendence in Christianity. There was by no means "a *new* tactile piety that attached itself to things, to bones and relics, to places and shrines, to sacred books," as Robert Wilken claimed.[104] These practices had always been with the religion in all its forms.

But how does the *martyr* function in the thought-world of apocalyptic or "utopian" Christianity? In the context of Coptic pilgrimage, it must be remembered, the martyr provided concrete "places" of sanctity in a landscape denuded of the old religious centers. They anchored both heaven and a mythical age of heroes and executions in a convenient stone rotunda. The martyr symbolized not only access to heaven but also the "blessings" that everyone could bring home in sand, oil, or cloth. What links a figure of such immediate functions, of such this-worldliness, with the otherworldly tendencies of the second- and third-century sects?

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[102] Protective seals: Rev 2:17b; 7:3–8; 22:4; *2Jeu* 52 and *passim; Apocalypse of Elijah* 1:8–11. Scripture fragments as talismans: E.A. Judge, "The Magical Use of Scripture in the Papyri," *Perspectives on Language and Text,* ed. by Edgar W. Conrad and Edward G. Newing (Winona Lake, IN 1987), 339–49; Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven and London 1995), 237–41. Use of ritual spells: David Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," *ANRW* II.23.2 (1980):1507–57; Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic* (San Francisco 1994). In general on writing and ritual power, see David Frankfurter, "The Magic of Writing and the Writing of Magic: The Power of the Word in Egyptian and Greek Traditions," *Helios* 21 (1994):189–221.

[103] On the "charismatic literacy" of local scribes in African Islam and Christianity see Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (Chicago 1969), 286–87; Abdullahi Osman El-Tom, "Drinking the Koran: The Meaning of Koranic Verses in Berti erasure," *"Popular Islam" South of the Sahara* (*Africa* 55, 4), ed. by J.D.Y. Peel and C.C. Stewart (Manchester 1985), 414–31; David Sperling, "The Frontiers of Prophecy," 90–92; and Allan Young, "Magic as a 'Quasi-Profession': The Organization of Magic and Magical Healing Among Amhara," *Ethnology* 14 (1975):245–65.

[104] Wilken, *The Land Called Holy,* 115, emphasis mine.

Materials like the *Martyrdom of Perpetua* and the letters of Cyprian of Carthage exhibit the shamanistic role assumed by imprisoned martyrs, shuttling between the world of the living and that extravagant heavenly world described in apocalyptic literature.[105] One can certainly trace the notion of the "useful" martyr and his or her practical mediation with the supernatural world through these third-century African materials. But one text with a profoundly apocalyptic heritage and an explicitly millennialist program links the perspective of the Coptic martyr cult with the wild expectations of early Egyptian Christianity.

The *Apocalypse of Elijah*, one of a number of prophetic tracts produced in the third century following traditional Egyptian formulae for describing inter-regnal chaos, reflects an ancient priestly ideal of Egypt, the land and its fertility, all the while advancing a Christian millennialist ideology. The two perspectives are thoroughly wed: Christ is virtually the apocalyptic Pharoah.[106] But the author's interests return continually to the powers of the "saints." They undergo excruciating torture (4:22–23). Those who succumb rather than flee gain a higher status in heaven (4:24–29). Their bodies are preserved in the land "like rock" (4:26), evidently for the benefit of devotees (a sentiment expressed in the *Martyrdom of Paēse and Thecla* above). Their presence in the land fructifies the earth, causes the sun to shine and dew to fall (5:18), whereas their absence causes drought and famine (5:7–14). Finally, the eschatological martyr Tabitha, the ultimate martyr anticipated by the author, will leave healing blood for the faithful (4:3–6).[107] These fantasies, while set in the eschaton, provide the link between the veneration of martyrs as blessed mediators and seers in an otherworldly, shamanistic sense and a reverence for their very relics as efficacious and as sources of terrestrial beneficence and healing. One could hardly say that this view of relics begins only in the third century, since the late second-century *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (17.1) reflects some regard for martyrs' relics and the ritual focus they offer devotees. But for the Egyptian world the *Apocalypse of Elijah* brings us conveniently close, first, to Athanasius's own askance remarks about "Melitians" who preserve martyrs' bodies in houses as links to the heavenly world, and then to the dynamic cult complexes of the fifth and later centuries.[108]

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[105] *Martyrdom of Perpetua*: ed. & tr. Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford 1972), 106–31; Letters of Cyprian of Carthage: see Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques*, chap. 2.

[106] See Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt*, chaps. 7–8.

[107] Frankfurter, "The Cult of the Martyrs in Egypt Before Constantine," and on Tabitha: *idem*, "Tabitha in the Apocalypse of Elijah," *JTS* 41 (1990):13–25.

Martyrs represented useful bodies—"our" bodies, and their places were facilities, not vaults. The hagiographies reflect these attitudes. As the *Apocalypse of Elijah* imagines hopefully a landscape in which martyrs are permanently available as "rock," Coptic martyrologies allow the ultimate integrity of the martyrs' bodies despite horrendous tortures and dismemberments. Like the *Apocalypse of Elijah*'s fantasy of the all-healing "Tabitha's blood," the *Martyrdom of Apa Shenoufe and his Brethren* concludes with the heroes' gruesome reduction to healing paste:

> Their bodies were cast under the mill-wheel, and they were ground down until their bones were broken one upon another into little pieces; and their blood and their bodies and their skin clave to the mill-wheel. A great multitude of that nome gathered together, and they came to the saints, and saw them. Every person who was sick of a grievous illness of any sort, they took of the blood of the saints, and put (it) upon their members which were diseased; the blind received sight, the lame walked, the deaf received hearing, the dumb spoke, and the lepers were cleansed, ... And thus they fulfilled their dispensation and their martyrdom, the twelve noble martyrs, Apa Shenoufe and Apa Philemon and Apa Nilius and Apa Peter and Apa Andrew and Apa John and Apa Phoebammon and Ama Sophia and Apa Antony and Apa Hermias and Apa Chaeremon and Apa Philip.[109]

And even then the martyrs manage to be buried in one place—significantly, near a village, for which the tomb would be a local shrine. The text's putative author, moreover, writes of his own hospitality to many "saints" released from prison at the accession of Constantine. Those who eventually died naturally at his house he later buried "within my storehouses and workshops."[110] Coptic tradition clearly put a premium on the whole corpse, preserved in intimate connection with the living.[111]

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[108] Athanasius against "Melitian" martyr-cult: *V.Ant.* 91; *Ep.* 41 (369), tr. by David Brakke in this volume; and discussions by Lefort, "La chasse aux reliques," and Baumeister, *Martyr invictus* 64.

[109] Martyrdom of S. Shenoufe and His Brethren, Pierpont Morgan Codex M 583, 135 V ii–136 R i, ed. and tr. Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms*, 124–25, 219 (tr.).

Indeed, it is now indisputable that native Egyptian traditions about the dead and their powers, the sacred value of bodies, and the salvific powers of divinized human figures influenced the establishment of the Coptic martyr cult to a tremendous degree.[112] At the same time, as Allen Kerkeslager shows, evidence for Egyptian *Jewish* precedents to Coptic saint-veneration, its sites, its lore, or indeed anything more specific than a common human respect for family tombs, is utterly lacking. Thus Christian ideology, especially in its more lurid aspect of martyrology, actually provided the medium for the revitalization and redefinition of popular Egyptian religious attitudes. The *Apocalypse of Elijah* provides evidence for this cultural synthesis, to be sure, but the text's more immediate relevance is in attaching these same longings for holy bodies and for the lively mediation of deceased heroes to the otherworldly preoccupations of apocalyptic Christianity as well. Thus regional concerns and traditions exert their influence on Egyptian Christianity from well before the fourth century. Pilgrimage cults, the linch-pins of rural Christianization, were no folk hybrid off a religion of a supreme Christ but rather the reification of central early Christian martyrological beliefs.

VI. *The Literary Imagination of Sacred Geography*

One of the striking elements of the *Apocalypse of Elijah* is its projection of a network of what it calls "holy places" *onto* the Egyptian landscape, but a network that is apparently *modelled after* the Holy Land—or an image of Palestine as Holy Land.[113] Since we cannot verify the existence of martyria or tomb-shrines either in Egypt or in Palestine before the fourth century,[114] the author's image of holy places may represent a double act of imagination: an ideal picture of Palestine as Holy Land imposed upon a prophetic picture of Egypt as a network of shrines. Each picture had its basis in tradition: Palestine through scriptural passages and legends, Egypt through native perceptions of a god-marked landscape. But brought together in this way these themes in the *Apocalypse of Elijah* display the growing autonomy of the text from the real historical landscape in determining and even inventing sacred geography.

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[110] Martyrdom of S. Shenoufe and His Brethren, 138 R i, ed. and tr. Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms*, 126–27, 221 (tr.).

[111] See Frankfurter, "Cult of the Martyrs," 31–32, and Terry Wilfong, "Reading the Disjointed Body in Coptic: From Physical Modification to Textual Fragmentation," *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the Human Body in Antiquity*, ed. Dominic Montserrat (London 1997), 116–36.

[112] Among more recent studies: Baumeister, *Martyr invictus*; Wolfgang Schenkel, *Kultmythos und Märtyrerlegende: Zur Kontinuität des ägyptischen Denkens*, *GOF* 4, Ägypten 5 (Wiesbaden 1977); Jan Quaegebeur, "Les 'saints' égyptiens préchrétiens," *OLP* 8 (1977):129–43; J.F. Borghouts, "Martyria: Some Correspondent Motifs in Egyptian Religion," *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie*, Studia Post-Biblica 38, ed. J.W.

Section II above described the use of landscape and shrines in local religions as a means for thinking and acting out the resolution of misfortune, the acquisition of beneficence, social identity, the authority of institutions, and religion itself. What we encounter increasingly in the fourth and later centuries, however, is the use of sacred landscapes and topographies as *literary structure*, whether to be subsequently anchored into the real landscape through "identifications" or to function as an alternative medium for the experience of sacred geography.[115]

The anchoring of the Christian gospels, and from there much of biblical legend, into Jerusalem and Palestine provides perhaps the best example of the creation of sacred geography on the basis of sacred text. From the "discovery" of the Holy Sepulchre and its enshrinement as a new Temple, to the identification of place after place as

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Van Henten (Leiden 1989), 197–203; and Willy Clarysse, "The Coptic Martyr Cult," *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective: Memorial Louis Reekmans*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 117, ed. by M. Lamberigts and P. Van Deun (Louvain 1995), 377–95.

[113] See Frankfurter, "Cult of the Martyrs," 32–37.

[114] It should be noted that the silence on this topic is an extremely weak argument against such shrines, even in Palestine, where it is hard to imagine Jewish folk piety as so different from others in the Mediterranean world that the veneration of saints' tombs could not have occurred.

[115] It is not difficult to follow one root of this idea into early Jewish apocalyptic literature, whose heavenly and eschatological landscapes often presented transcendent substitutes for the lack (or insufficiency or inaccessibility) of a real sacred landscape. See Susan Niditch, "Ezekiel 40–48 in a Visionary Context," *CBQ* 48 (1986):208–24, and Martha Himmelfarb, "The Temple and the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel, the Book of the Watchers, and the Wisdom of ben Sira," *Sacred Space and Profane Spaces: Essays in the Geographies of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Jamie Scott and Paul Simpson-Housley (Westport, CT 1991), 63–78.

the location of some scriptural event, the creation of a Christian holy land was a deliberate endeavor, a reification of scriptural myth within a visible, walkable landscape.[116]

Early Christian liturgical practices and their combination of procession with public reading motivated this identification and enshrining of sites. Now the "places" described or assumed in the annual cycle of lections could emerge as physically separate points in a holy land—"the overlaying," in the words of Jonathan Z. Smith, "of a temporal system and a spatial system."[117] Stational liturgy in this religion thus began as the mapping of book onto landscape, rendered into ritual terms through the dimension of calendar.

The famous pilgrim's journal of Egeria makes the late fourth-century Holy Land pilgrimage to consist essentially of scripture readings followed by quests for the actual sites (all facilitated by creative local tour-guides). It was place itself that inspired the imagination, even if it bore little visible correspondence to scripture. By the end of the fourth century, however, with the increasing competition to articulate a religious orthodoxy and "center," and with the increasing importance of Christian writing in this competition, certain voices emerged in criticism of the urge to reify, to "place" piety. These voices promoted instead the autonomous authority of scripture in Christian devotion and self-definition.

"True worshippers," declared Jerome, "worship the Father neither at Jerusalem nor on Mount Gerizim, for 'God is a spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth'."[118] Jerome had urged several others to use the Holy Land as a stage for the experience of scriptural narrative. But gradually, for him as for Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius, and others, scripture ultimately took precedence over real landscape as the relevant geography.[119] "Access to the courts of heaven is as easy from Britain as it is from Jerusalem," Jerome explained, deposing the notion of a terrestrial center in favor of a transcendent geography—a geography notably to be interpreted and mediated only by ecclesiastical authorities![120]

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[116] See Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient*, 36–41, 59; Smith, *To Take Place*, chap. 4; Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, chaps. 5–6; and Blake Leyerle, "Landscape as Cartography in Early Christian Pilgrimage Narratives," *JAAR* 64, 1 (1996):119–43.

[117] Smith, *To Take Place* 92; cf. Wilken, *Land Called Holy* 113–14.

[118] Jerome, *Ep.* 58 to Paulinus of Nola, 3 (quoting Jn. 4:24), ed. I. Hilberg, CSCL 54 (Vienna and Leipzig 1910), 530.

[119] See Simon, "Pèlerinages en l'antiquité chrétienne," 112–15; Wilken, *Land Called Holy* 117–25, 301 n. 67; Leyerle, "Landscape as Cartography," 130–32.

New research on the ancient *Lives of the Prophets*, once thought to be an early Jewish legend-anthology and guide to the shrines of biblical holy men, has revealed that this text was actually of Christian composition, participating in the same general enterprise of replacing real landscape with an ideal literary geography. The *Lives of the Prophets* uses the landscape of Palestine and legends of biblical prophets as a rationale for the wild endeavors of Christian holy men, who were gaining considerable authority in the Mediterranean world of the fifth century.

As rationale for their charisma and their "place" in the Holy Land, the text may have served. However, it was not a warrant for pilgrimage. The narratives of the *Lives of the Prophets*, David Satran has argued, provided an alternative medium for the place-centered piety that predominated in late antiquity—a medium that once again alerted the reader to the priority of scripture, and indeed of any pious text, in locating holy space:

> Much in the way that a burgeoning transportation of relics brought holy men and their shrines to distant points in the Christian world, the widespread transmission of the *Lives* circulated the prophets through both the East and West. Indeed, one might argue that the *vitae*, often detached from their previous literary context(s), were themselves "relics" of both holy man and holy land, ready to be enshrined in a new setting.[121]

So also the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, that veritable manifesto on the holy man phenomenon at its apex, provides a vision of sacred geography altogether for the reader's benefit. Alert to an authorial voice that resembles the Greco-Roman travelogue far more closely than the pious pilgrim's diary, Georgia Frank in this volume shows the *Historia*'s construction of a distant land of miraculous hermits, organized around that alluring symbol, the desert. It is a scene at the same time exotic and holy, and it brought together the historical realities of charismatic hermits, their scriptural rationale in biblical prototypes (like the prophet Elijah), and popular literary genres of the time. But through this literary rendering the hermits became less the regional prophets of Egyptian religious history and more a text-bound museum of artifacts evoking biblical tradition.

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[120] Jerome, *Ep.* 58, 2.

[121] David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine*, 112.

Thus as the text comes to provide, for a select constituency, a substitute geography, so also the sacred points that mark a geography are appropriated as mere literary or theological symbols: scriptural sites, martyrs and their relics, and living hermits. Hagiography and other literary genres become the means of domesticating the contemporary prophet-thaumaturge, not simply of justifying the ascetic movement. As an edifying portrait of the father of asceticism, for example, Athanasius's *Life of Antony* offers a critique of ascetic figures who were quite independent of ecclesiastical control.[122] The Alexandrian bishop's struggle for centralized authority against the diversity of cults emerging in fourth-century Egypt under the rubric of Christianity thus extended well beyond the cult of martyrs.

And yet it is clear that this struggle did not succeed in defining Coptic Christianity. The *Historia monachorum* and the *Lives of the Prophets* were copied over and over in the wider late antique world, as pious reading for the literate Christian householder or distant monk trying to imagine his ascetic ancestors. Athanasius might be canonized as an articulate interpreter of scripture and a peerless ecclesiastical organizer for his time. But the archaeology, papyrology, and much hagiography of Coptic Christianity show us Apa Mena, Saints Cyrus and John, St. Colluthus, St. Philoxenus, and countless other local and regional shrines, hosting crowds at feast days, dispensing dust, oil, dreams, and oracles. And in the Coptic ostraca, letters, and hagiographical fragments we see miracle-working holy men who defined the very nature of Christianity in their areas.[123]

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[122] See Michael Williams, "The *Life of Antony* and the Domestication of Charismatic Wisdom."

[123] Along with texts listed in note 56, see monks' spells in Meyer and Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic* ##63, 104.

II

INDIGENOUS FOUNDATIONS

LES DÉPLACEMENTS PIEUX EN ÉGYPTE PHARAONIQUE: SITES ET PRATIQUES CULTUELLES*

YOURI VOLOKHINE

La question des pèlerinages et des pèlerins

Encore aujourd'hui, l'étude que Jean Yoyotte écrivit en 1960 sur les pèlerinages en Egypte ancienne fait référence et demeure indispensable à consulter.[1] Le dossier réuni est très complet, offrant une claire mise au point méthodologique et un important choix de sources. Depuis cette publication, peu de nouveaux documents importants sont venus compléter les références réunies alors. Récemment, M. Malaise et E. Bernand ont utilement complété l'article fondateur de J. Yoyotte.[2] Cependant, il pourra sembler nécessaire, dans un volume sur les pèlerinages coptes, de réfléchir encore sur les éventuelles préfigurations de ce phénomène en Egypte pré-chrétienne. Au préalable, on ne peut éviter d'évoquer les réserves que certains ont formulées sur la question. Il y a en effet une ancienne réticence à user du terme "pèlerinage" pour décrire une manifestation religieuse observée en Egypte pharaonique. On gardera à l'esprit qu'il n'existe pas de termes égyptiens traduisant ou même évoquant *grosso modo* le terme "pèlerinage". Mais la raison invoquée pour ce refus est ailleurs. Ainsi, dans le *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, H. Beinlich ne consacre-t-il que quelques lignes à sa notice "Wallfahrt": la notion de pèlerinage ne s'applique pas selon lui à l'Egypte ancienne avant les époques tardives.[3] Cette situation, ce refus de poser le problème, s'explique par le fait que les attestations égyptiennes ne sont pas conformes aux définitions du pèlerinage telles que choisies par l'auteur. Ce rejet catégorique est ancien. Comme l'évoquait J. Yoyotte dans sa présentation du sujet, certains auteurs reconnaissent l'existence de pèlerinages en Egypte (J. Vandier, H. Bonnet),[4] d'autres concèdent à ce phénomène une existence occasionnelle (A. Erman), d'autres enfin préfèrent ne pas faire usage du terme (S. Morenz).[5] Comment prendre méthodologiquement position sur cette question? Faut-il, pour traiter du pèlerinage, en choisir au préalable une définition qui devrait se révéler contraignante? Henry Branthomme proposait aux chercheurs conviés à enquêter sur les pèlerinages du monde non-chrétien un cadre assez souple et peu restrictif: "l'existence d'un lieu sacré, ou considéré comme tel; une démarche spéciale pour s'y rendre (...) un certain nombre d'actes religieux, individuels ou collectifs à accomplir avant, pendant, à l'arrivée et au retour de cette marche."[6] De même, les rédacteurs du volume *Les pèlerinages* de la collection "Sources orientales" cherchaient à éviter la contrainte des définitions pré-établies, mais s'accordaient pour une description minimum du phénomène: la sainteté du lieu où l'on se rend spécialement; le déplacement collectif ou individuel vers ce lieu; le but du déplacement qui est l'obtention d'un certain bien matériel ou spirituel.[7] En se contentant d'une telle définition, il semblerait que tous les éléments soient requis pour reconnaître l'existence de pèlerinages en Egypte. Mais la notion de pèlerinage est bâtie en bonne partie sur un modèle chrétien et musulman. Si l'on adopte comme schéma de référence pour le pèlerinage des rassemblements du type de ceux de La Mecque ou de Lourdes, la documentation égyptienne, qui n'atteste pas comme nous le verrons de pareils déplacements de populations sur une longue distance, infirme le pèlerinage massif. Il reste que l'on peut reconnaître facilement comme universel le fait que tout pratiquant dans toute culture peut, un jour ou l'autre, être amené à visiter un sanctuaire, un site particulièrement vénéré, hors de son horizon immédiat: dans ce cadre, l'Egypte n'échappe pas à la règle.

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* Je tiens à remercier, pour leurs suggestions dans l'élaboration de cet article, le prof. P. Borgeaud, D. Devauchelle, et D. Frankfurter.

[1] J. Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Egypte ancienne", *Les pèlerinages*, Sources Orientales 3 (Paris 1960), 19–74.

[2] M. Malaise, "Pèlerinages et pèlerins dans l'Egypte ancienne", *Histoire des pèlerinages non chrétiens. Entre magique et sacré: le chemin des dieux*, ed. J. Chélini et H. Branthomme (Paris 1987), 55–82 et pour les pèlerinages d'époque gréco-romaine, voir E. Bernand, "Pèlerins dans l'Egypte gréco-romaine," *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque*, ed. M.M. Mactoux et E. Genys, Centre de recherches d'histoire ancienne, Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon (Paris 1988), 49–63.

[3] H. Beinlich, s.v. "Wallfahrt," *LÄ* 6 (1986):1145–1146.

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[4] Voir la notice de H. Bonnet, s.v. "Wallfahrt", *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin 1952), 861–863.

[5] Comme l'évoquait Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Egypte ancienne," 20–21. La situation est toujours identique et l'on peut encore constater dans les synthèses récentes l'usage parcimonieux du terme. Sur cette question, voir aussi Bernand, "Pèlerins dans l'Egypte gréco-romaine," 50.

[6] *Histoire des pèlerinages non chrétiens*, ed. Jean Chélini et Henry Branthomme (Paris 1987), 21.

[7] *Les pèlerinages*, 9–10.

Dans un volume consacré au monde copte, où la pratique des pèlerinages est d'une importance considérable, il peut être utile de mettre en évidence les antécédents, les "points de raccord" pour reprendre une expression de J. Quaegebeur, entre le monde copte et l'ancienne tradition égyptienne. Dans différents domaines religieux, des antécédents préchrétiens ont été reconnus,[8] et l'on a justement évoqué, dans cette optique, la question des pèlerinages.[9] Il ne s'agit pas d'affirmer que les pratiques égyptiennes préchrétiennes de visites et de déplacements vers les sanctuaires préfigurent strictement les coutumes coptes. Il existe à l'évidence un particularisme copte irréductible: les "sept aspects spécifiques" du pèlerinage copte définis par G. Viaud ne présentent donc pas tous un terrain idéal à un éventuel "accrochage" avec les pratiques pharaoniques (mise à part la question de l'incubation).[10] Mais il reste à observer les éléments constitutifs et les conditions indispensables d'un pèlerinage: voyage et motivation religieuse du voyage (ou lors du voyage), lieu sacré vers lequel on se rend, démarche individuelle ou collective. Ces éléments sont présents dans l'Egypte chrétienne et païenne.

Enfin, il ne faudra pas perdre de vue que les différentes rubriques qui seront traitées ici embrassent une large chronologie, dans l'intention de dresser un état général de la question. On aura donc soin de pas oublier les grandes inégalités de notre documentation entre les époques anciennes et plus récentes. En outre, l'évolution indéniable des croyances égyptiennes au cours des millénaires, l'émergence progressive dans notre documentation des témoignages d'une religiosité personnelle, doivent nécessairement être prises en compte pour comprendre les attitudes individuelles envers les dieux. Pèleriner implique un but au voyage, un site de visite, des lieux de passage. Dans ce cadre, nous rencontrerons essentiellement les temples et leurs abords, ainsi que certains sites particuliers (mais toujours bâtis); aussi les conditions d'accès et l'environnement des sanctuaires doivent-ils également être envisagés. Nous serons conduits inévitablement à traiter des inscriptions de visiteurs. Ces derniers, s'ils ne sont pas des pèlerins au sens plein du terme, en adoptent néanmoins quelques caractéristiques (déplacement vers un lieu saint, intention pieuse). La première partie de cet article abordera la question des déplacements pieux jusqu'à la Basse Epoque. Une seconde partie sera consacrée à l'époque gréco-romaine. Cette division est surtout suggérée par l'apport de la documentation en langue grecque.

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[8] J. Quaegebeur, "Les "saints" égyptiens préchrétiens", *OLP* 8 (1977):129.

[9] G. Viaud, *Les pèlerinages coptes en Égypte*, Bibliothèque d'Etudes Coptes 15 (Cairo 1979), 78. C'est au sujet des "possédés" que Viaud dit que "nous devons tenir compte d'une mentalité qui est l'héritière de la pensée et des sentiments religieux de l'âme de l'Ancienne Egypte. Beaucoup de phénomènes religieux coptes doivent se référer aux traditions de l'Egypte pharaonique".

[10] A savoir: les prières spéciales, les baptêmes, les voeux, les offrandes, la convergence des pauvres vers les sanctuaires, les soins accordés aux malades, et la question des possédés: Viaud, *Pèlerinages coptes en Égypte*, 75 et *idem*, s.v. "Pilgrimages", *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. A.S. Atiya (New York 1991), 1968–1975.

I. *Egypte ancienne*

A. *Voyager en Egypte*

Pour pèleriner, au sens étymologique du terme, il faut voyager, se déplacer. Le problème réside en la motivation première du voyage. Pour J. Yoyotte, les Egyptiens sont plus *passés* en pèlerinage, qu'*allés* en pèlerinage. Au lieu de pèlerins, nous trouvons donc plutôt des visiteurs occasionnels de sites ou de monuments, qui n'ont souvent pas manqué de laisser traces de leur passage. Il ne s'agira pas ici d'établir une frontière nette entre visiteurs pieux et pèlerins, ce qui est un peu aléatoire, et procède finalement plus de la querelle terminologique que d'une distinction impérative.

1. *Prendre la route: les risques du voyage*

Prendre la route pour partir loin de chez soi, sortir des limites de son nome, cela n'était pas très aisé en Egypte. Les déplacements des Egyptiens au sein de leur propre pays ne sont pas des voyages d'agrément. Si l'on se déplace, c'est parce que l'on doit remplir une tâche, une mission, généralement confiée par l'administration à ses fonctionnaires. Le paysan, la masse silencieuse de l'Egypte ancienne, reste attaché à sa terre.[11] Certaines catégories de la population sont appelées à voyager: les artisans, qui, vraisemblablement, essaimaient à partir de certains centres de formation, les militaires qui se déplaçaient avec leur garnison, les fonctionnaires, les "messagers" particulièrement,[12] et les prêtres à qui l'on pouvait confier une charge dans une autre cité. Voyager reste cependant un acte suffisamment extraordinaire pour avoir marqué l'imaginaire: ce n'est pas un hasard si bon nombre de textes littéraires égyptiens ont le voyage comme toile de fond ou même centre de leur intrigue. Ainsi le voyage aux confins mythiques du récit du "Naufragé", le voyage à but commercial du paysan spolié (un voyage singulièrement contrarié), les tribulations de Sinouhé,[13] le voyage d'Ounamon, les péripéties du conte des deux frères dans une topographie fabuleuse. De même dans les récits mythiques, les dieux ne se privent pas de parcourir en long et en large une Egypte qui apparaît comme une transposition du territoire réel.[14] On peut relever plusieurs éléments expliquant la nature particulière du voyage dans la pensée et particulièrement la méfiance ou la crainte des Egyptiens au moment de prendre la route. Bien entendu, voyager en Egypte est toujours grevé des risques d'accidents inhérents à l'entreprise; qui plus est, le parcours peut amener le voyageur sur les routes du désert, région pour laquelle on connaît l'aversion atavique des Egyptiens. L'appréhension du voyage, le fait de partir loin de son horizon familier, se double également de la peur d'une mort qui pourrait survenir loin des siens. Un tel décès risquerait de priver le défunt des soins funéraires dont il a impérativement besoin pour subsister dans l'au-delà. Sinouhé nous fait part de cette crainte communément exprimée:

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[11] Voir le portrait saisissant du paysan égyptien écrit par R. Caminos, "Le paysan", dans: *L'Homme Egyptien*, éd. S. Donadoni (Paris 1992; éd. originale *L'Uomo egiziano* 1990), 15–49.

> Ô, tout dieu (quel que tu sois) qui es à l'origine de cette fuite, sois clément et ramène-moi à la maison. Sûrement, tu permettras que je

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[12] Sur ces fonctionnaires voir M. Valloggia, *Recherche sur les "messagers" (wpwtyw) dans les sources égyptiennes profanes*, Centre de recherche d'histoire et de philologie de la IV^e section de l'EPHE, Hautes Etudes orientales (Genève/Paris 1976). Sur la circulation des artisans, cf. J.-L. de Cenival, "Les textes de la statue E. 25550 du Musée du Louvre", *RdE* 17 (1965), 15–20, où nous lisons: "j'ai été un artisan compétent pour la Haute et la Basse Egypte, le travail de mes bras a atteint Eléphantine, et au nord, Tcha-(Iou), dans les monuments que Sa Majesté a faits pour Amon" (p. 16).

[13] Pour une rapide présentations de ces textes, voir l'utile recension de R.B. Parkinson, "Teachings, discourses and tales from the Middle Kingdom", *Middle Kingdom Studies*, ed. S. Quirke (Whitstable 1991), 91–122 (le Paysan éloquent p. 115, le Naufragé, 115–116, Sinouhé, 113–114).

[14] D. Meeks et C. Favard-Meeks, *La vie quotidienne des dieux égyptiens* (Paris 1993), 125–142 (les espaces et les lieux). Parmi les mythes relatifs aux voyages des dieux vers l'étranger, on relèvera notamment le mythe de l'oeil de Ré en Nubie, voir: Y. Volokhine, "Quelques remarques sur la déesse égyptienne Hathor et ses rapports avec l'étranger", *Scholarly Approaches to Religion, Interreligious perceptions and Islam*, Studia Religiosa Helvetica 1 (Bern 1995), 209–223.

> voie (à nouveau) l'endroit où mon coeur passe la journée. Qu'y a-t-il de plus important que mon corps soit enseveli dans le terroir dans lequel je suis né?[15]

Lorsque le voyage s'impose, il faut résoudre l'importante difficulté du trajet lui-même.[16] Anciennement, il existait un réseau de pistes, reliant les oasis à la vallée du Nil, parcourues par des caravanes, que l'on empruntait lors de voyages qui restaient toujours difficiles vu l'aridité et l'hostilité du désert.[17] Dans la Vallée, le moyen de transport usuel est bien sûr le bateau, le Nil étant un axe de communication naturel. C'est à partir du vocabulaire nautique que l'on désigne le fait de voyager vers le sud ou le nord. C'est sur les bateaux de l'administration que les officiels en mission se déplaçaient; il ne semble pas que les privés pour leur part pouvaient facilement disposer de barques. Il y a donc également des obstacles matériels et topographiques aux voyages en Egypte, qui s'ajoutent à une réticence préalable. Ainsi, c'est lors de voyages contraints que les Egyptiens ont parfois pris le chemin d'un sanctuaire autre que celui de leur terroir d'origine. Ajoutons que le détour par un sanctuaire n'est pas obligatoire: il s'avère d'autant plus révélateur d'une attitude personnelle. Si la question de la motivation s'efface lors d'un voyage forcé, elle ressurgit donc lors du détour facultatif, un détour qui, dans bien des cas, est néanmoins ancré dans une coutume. Ainsi, le plus souvent, les visites aux sanctuaires se déroulent lors de voyages initialement prévus à d'autres fins. C'est certainement ce constat qui a parfois conduit à rejeter l'acception du terme "pèlerinage" pour l'Egypte. Or, cette réticence ne peut que s'effacer si l'on veut bien accepter l'idée que le pèlerinage consiste en un moment du voyage, c'est-à-dire le "pèlerinage occasionnel" décrit par J. Yoyotte. Cette adaptation, cet équilibrage de la notion de pèlerinage pour notre matière est nécessaire. Par ailleurs, le fait de pèleriner en Egypte ne peut être restreint aux longs déplacements: il faut également envisager les pèlerinages locaux, les déplacements périodiques, par exemple à l'occasion des fêtes.

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[15] Sinouhé B 156–160.

[16] Malaise, *Histoire des pèlerinages*, 65–66.

[17] M. Valloggia, "Les routes du désert dans l'Egypte ancienne", *Le désert. Image et réalité*, Les Cahiers du CEPOA 3 (Louvain 1989), 165–171; voir également J. Osing, "Les voies de communication entre les oasis égyptiennes et la vallée du Nil", *Voyages et voyageurs au proche-orient ancien*, Les Cahiers du CEPOA 6 (Louvain 1995), 159 sq.

2. *Voyager en pensée*

Prendre la décision de partir en pèlerinage, ou de faire un détour pour visiter un dieu, exprime un intérêt envers une divinité liée à un site éloigné de l'horizon géographique immédiat du fidèle. On pourrait être tenté de déceler dans la littérature des témoignages d'un tel type d'intérêt. Certains textes font en effet état d'un attachement envers une ville ou un dieu lointain: dans la poésie amoureuse du Nouvel Empire,[18] plusieurs allusions de ce type sont à remarquer. Dans une rêverie, le protagoniste du papyrus Harris 500 voyage en esprit jusqu'à la ville de Memphis:[19]

> Je suis en train de descendre le fleuve dans le bateau, en tant que rameur attitré(?), ma natte de roseau sur l'épaule. Je me dirige vers Ankh-taouy (toponyme désignant Memphis). Je dirai à Ptah, maître de justice, "Donne-moi la "soeur" cette nuit!". Le fleuve, il est comme du vin, Ptah est son roseau, Sakhmis sa feuille de lotus, Iadet son bouton de lotus, Néfertoum sa fleur de lotus joyeuse, (Hathor?) c'est de sa beauté que s'éclaire le pays. Memphis est comme une coupe de mandragore déposée devant "Celui-qui-fait-bonne-figure."[20]

Dans la suite du texte, la compagne ("la soeur") exprime un désir similaire de voyage vers un dieu, en l'occurrence Ré, à Héliopolis.[21]

Le papyrus Anastasi IV (XIX^{e} Dynastie) consigne un texte aux accents comparables mais dans un contexte différent (il s'agit d'une miscellanée), qui exprime également l'attachement à un dieu, le désir d'aller lui rendre visite:[22]

> Vois, ma pensée (litt. mon coeur: ib) est partie comme un voleur. Elle se hâte vers un lieu qu'elle a vu. Elle est partie au Sud pour voir Hout-ka-Ptah (Memphis). Ainsi, si je suis assis en attendant mon coeur (ma pensée), c'est pour qu'elle me dise comment est Memphis. Aucune tâche n'est accomplie de ma main, mon coeur (hâty) bat (litt. bondit)

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[18] Sur cette littérature, voir B. Mathieu, *La poésie amoureuse de l'Egypte ancienne*, BdE 115 (Cairo 1996), P. Vernus, *Chants d'amour de l'Egypte antique* (Paris 1992). Egalement D. Meeks, s.v. "Liebeslieder", *LÄ* 3 (1979):1048–1052.

[19] Mathieu, *La poésie amoureuse*, 58; Vernus, *Chants d'amour*, 76.

[20] Traduction: P. Vernus. Nefer-her "celui-au-beau-visage"; sur cette épithète notamment liée au Ptah memphite, voir par exemple M. Sandman-Holmberg, *The God Ptah* (Lund 1946), 109–111.

[21] Vernus, *Chants d'amour*, 77.

[22] Pap.Anastasi IV 4.11–5.3, cf. A.H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 7 (Bruxelles 1937), 39 9–13; trad: R. Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, Brown Egyptological Studies I (Oxford 1954), 150–152.

> à sa place. Viens à (moi) Ptah et emmène (moi) vers Memphis; fais que je te voie librement. Je passe les jours alors que ma pensée (ib) est endormie, comme morte ...

Dans le cas présent, le texte n'exprime pas l'attachement envers un dieu d'une région très lointaine, puisque le texte provient de la région Memphite, mais exprime un désir très marqué de se rendre en un lieu précis. Le souhait de séjourner dans une cité est ainsi un thème littéraire courant à l'époque ramesside. Ces textes témoignent essentiellement d'un attachement envers la région natale.[23] Reconnaître dans ces textes une expression du désir de partir en pèlerinage serait exagéré. Cependant, ils témoignent d'un état d'esprit qui pourrait prédisposer à cette entreprise.

3. *Les voyages des morts*

S'il existe un authentique désir de partir en pèlerinage en Egypte, c'est dans un contexte funéraire qu'il faut le situer. On a tenté de déceler derrière les différentes scènes où le défunt se rend en barque dans des villes saintes le reflet de la pratique du pèlerinage, car les Egyptiens ont souvent conçu l'au-delà à l'aune du monde terrestre. Comme l'a clairement résumé J. Yoyotte, il s'agit néanmoins de considérer *stricto sensu* ces manifestations comme funéraires.[24] Dès l'Ancien Empire, dans le cadre d'un rituel de régénération *post mortem*, le roi se rend en barque à des sanctuaires du Delta; on y a vu une visite à ses ancêtres.[25] La scène sera reprise dans les tombes des particuliers, et se colorera d'éléments osiriens à partir du Moyen Empire. Par ailleurs, dans les formules funéraires et les représentations figurées dans les tombes, dès le Moyen Empire, apparaît le souhait d'aller à Abydos. Ce pèlerinage des défunts consiste en une navigation: une barque funéraire se dirige vers la ville d'Abydos et s'en retourne; à son bord, le bénéficiaire accomplit donc un pèlerinage, mais *post mortem.* A bord du navire, c'est souvent l'effigie du défunt ou sa momie qui fait le trajet. Des modèles peuvent aussi suffire à la représentation de la scène, pour ceux qui n'ont pas les moyens de s'offrir un caveau décoré. Cette documentation nous confirme qu'il y a donc bien un désir, plutôt qu'une contingence liée à la survie dans l'au-delà, d'aller à Abydos, pour se concillier les faveurs du dieu des morts en sa ville d'élection. Ce voyage doit cependant être compris sur un plan funéraire, rituel. Comme il l'a été dit, le mort égyptien ne doit rien laisser inachevé sur terre.[26] Ce voyage "en images" pourrait s'inscrire dans un cursus idéal, et se substitue pleinement à la réalisation effective du pèlerinage. Les nombreuses représentations de promenades en barque, sur le Nil, dans les marais, en direction de régions mythiques (le "champ des offrandes"), ou comme on l'a vu vers un site fameux dont l'aura religieuse rayonne dans toute l'Egypte (Héliopolis, Bousiris, etc.),[27] procèdent certainement de la même symbolique. En parcourant la littérature funéraire, on se rend par ailleurs vite compte que les grands centres cultuels (Abydos, Saïs, Bouto, Héliopolis) apparaissent fréquemment comme des lieux où l'on souhaite se rendre, où l'on affirme être allé (pour assister à des cérémonies par exemple).[28] Significatif à cet égard le texte du "*Livre de parcourir l'Eternité*", rituel funéraire d'époque romaine, dévoile une véritable pérégrination dans l'Egypte à laquelle se livre le défunt, plus précisément son *ba.*[29] On peut se demander si ces phénomènes sont des substituts à des pèlerinages réels, que des contingences tant matérielles que topographiques ont rendus impossibles, ou au contraire si ces idées s'expriment indépendamment d'un regard vers le réel. Dans le premier cas, il faudrait supposer que le pèlerinage puisse être une exigence pour la survie dans l'au-delà; rien cependant ne peut le laisser entendre; c'est tout au plus un élément souhaitable pour la survie. Ensuite, la tentation de voir dans ces différentes mentions de pèlerinages funèbres et de voyages *post mortem* le reflet de pratiques courantes doit être confrontée à la documentation attestant des visites réelles; or, comme nous le verrons ci-dessous à propos du dossier abydénien, cette documentation infirme l'idée de pèlerinages massifs.

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[23] Voir sur le sujet de l'attachement à une ville, attachement qui n'est d'ailleurs pas exclusivement de nature pieuse, G. Posener, "La complainte de l'échanson Baky", *Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur*, ed. J. Assmann, E. Feucht, R. Grieshammer, Studien zum Gedenken E. Otto (Wiesbaden 1977), 385–397.

[24] Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Egypte ancienne," 25–28, pour les naviguations funèbres, 28–30 pour la pérégrination funéraire vers Saïs et Bouto et p. 30–33 pour Abydos. Ajouter notamment J. Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne* 5 (Paris 1969), 886–1014 *passim*, spécialement p. 941–953 et la notice détaillée de H. Altenmüller, s.v. "Abydosfahrt", *LÄ* 1 (1975):42–47; Malaise, *Histoire des pèlerinages*, 79–81.

[25] J. Vandier, "Quelques remarques sur les scènes de pèlerinages aux villes saintes dans les tombes de la XVIII^e Dynastie", *CdE* 19 (1944):35–61 résume et prolonge l'ancienne théorie de Junker (MDAIAK 9 [1940]), p. 1–39. Voir aussi C. Desroches-Noblecourt, "Poissons, tabous et transformations du mort. Nouvelles considérations sur les pèlerinages aux villes saintes", *Kêmi* 13 (1954):33–42, sur la nature symbolique de ce pèlerinage évoquant les transformations du mort.

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[26] Comme l'exprime C. Barocas, "La décoration des chapelles funéraires égyptiennes", dans: *La mort, les morts dans les sociétés anciennes*, ed. G. Gnoli et J.-P. Vernant (Cambridge/Paris 1982), 429–440, spécialement p. 435–436.

[27] Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Egypte ancienne," 25–28.

[28] Par exemple, dans le Livre des Morts: "je pleure ce que j'ai vu quand je sortais de la fête-deni à Abydos" (chap. 64, traduction: P. Barguet, *Le Livre des Morts des anciens Egyptiens*, LAPO 1 [Paris 1967], 102); voir aussi l'interrogatoire du chapitre 125 où le défunt mentionne sa participation aux mystères d'Abydos (op. cit., p. 163).

[29] Voir F.-R. Herbin, *Le Livre de parcourir l'Eternité*, OLA 58 (Louvain 1994); par exemple: "tu traverses cette terre sous la forme des vents et te hâtes vers le chemin que tu désires; tu vogues vers Busiris, tu naviques vers Ta-our (Abydos) (de sorte que) les provinces divines possèdent ton image" (I.14–15, op. cit., 48); "tu t'envoles vers les sanctuaires des temples de Busiris, et survoles les rivages d'Abydos" (II.3–4, op. cit., 50).

B. *Aller vers un dieu*

Partir en pèlerinage impliquerait donc de ressentir un attachement particulièrement marqué pour une divinité. Trouver l'expression de ce désir à l'Ancien et au Moyen Empire est rendu ardu en raison de la nature de la documentation, qui est essentiellement funéraire pour les époques anciennes. Il faut attendre le Nouvel Empire pour que le temple et ses abords nous soient mieux connus. La documentation, notamment épigraphique, nous révèle alors une religion populaire, une piété personnelle. Le dossier concernant cette forme de religiosité qui prend racine en Egypte au moins dès le Nouvel Empire est trop vaste pour que nous l'examinions ici.[30] Il serait cependant utile d'en évoquer quelques composants. Par la désignation de piété personnelle, phénomène que l'on a aussi appelé improprement "religion du pauvre" ou plus correctement "piété populaire", on entend généralement une forme de relation plus personnelle entre l'homme et le dieu qui se manifeste notamment par une phraséologie particulière, spécialement dans le vocabulaire de la prière, par la production d'objets votifs, attestant d'une relation directe et immédiate souhaitée entre le fidèle et le dieu. Ce phénomène, d'ailleurs, entretient avec l'idéologie officielle un rapport contrastif d'emprunts et de récupérations réciproques.[31]

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[30] Consulter notamment J. Baines, "Practical Religion and piety", *JEA* 73 (1987): 79–98; cet article est développé par Baines dans: "Society, morality and religious practice", in *Religion in Ancient Egypt*, éd. par B. Shaefer (Ithaca NY 1991), 123–200. Voir aussi les articles importants de G. Posener, "La piété personnelle avant l'âge amarnien", *RdE* 27 (1975):195–210; "Amon juge du pauvre" *BÄBA* 12 (1971), 59–63.

[31] Voir les conclusions de P. Vernus, "Le dieu personnel dans l'Egypte pharaoni-

1. *S'attacher à un dieu*

Une expression fréquente des inscriptions laissées par les visiteurs atteste qu'ils sont "venus voir" un site. On peut remarquer qu'un désir de contact visuel est exprimé dans d'autres catégories de témoignages. Parmi les idées exprimées par les Egyptiens dans le domaine de la "piété populaire", celle de "voir le dieu" (généralement le verbe utilisé est *m33*) nous importe donc particulièrement.[32] Ce souhait implique-t-il une notion de déplacement? Signifie-t-il implicitement "aller voir le dieu"? L'idée d'un déplacement "pour voir" sous-entend dans un premier temps qu'il y'a bien quelque chose à voir. Nous aurons à reparler brièvement des conditions d'accès au divin, d'accès au temple. Or, on le sait, le temple égyptien est un espace fermé: les dieux qui y résident, c'est-à-dire leurs statues cultuelles, sont normalement invisibles. Cet état de fait lié à la conception même de l'espace sacré égyptien, a notamment poussé les fidèles à substituer à cette absence visuelle et matérielle divers artifices (voir § I.C.1). Concrètement, "voir le dieu" peut signifier voir sa statue; l'expression a cependant également une valeur métaphorique, signifiant une relation que l'on souhaite intime entre le fidèle et le dieu.[33] Si les dieux résident sur terre (en tant que statues), ils restent cependant généralement invisibles au peuple, enfermés qu'ils sont au fond de leur naos. Les processions, désignées en égyptien par le terme de "sortie" (*prt*), permettent aux fidèles de voir la statue, du moins la châsse censée la contenir , portée par les prêtres; assister à une procession, si celle-ci est publique, implique un déplacement. Il est certain que certaines grandes processions devaient drainer un nombre considérable de fidèles qui "suivaient" le dieu à cette occasion.

2. *Notion de dieu local*

Une autre question importante est la notion de dieu local. Il se trouve que l'Egyptien tisse plus particulièrement des liens "affectifs"

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que", *Colloques de la Société Ernest-Renan*, Centre interdisciplinaire d'étude de l'évolution des idées, des sciences et techniques (Orsay 1977), 143–157. Du même auteur, on lira également pour une précision du contexte historique présidant à l'éclosion de la religion personnelle: *Affaires et scandales sous les Ramsès. La crise des valeurs dans l'Egypte du Nouvel Empire* (Paris 1993), 159–195.

[32] Cf. l'analyse de D. Van der Plas, "'Voir' Dieu. Quelques observations au sujet de la fonction des sens dans le culte et la dévotion de l'Egypte ancienne", *BSFE* 115 (1989):4–35.

[33] L'idée de "voir le dieu" revêt souvent un caractère purement métaphorique. Le fait que le soleil manifeste la présence d'un dieu (Ré, Amon-Ré), conduit à ce

avec les dieux de son terroir d'origine, de sa ville. Lorsqu'une raison (généralement professionnelle) le conduit à vivre dans une autre région, il préfère "avoir les dieux à la maison": on choisit de transporter ses dieux locaux avec soi plutôt que de retourner leur rendre visite.[34] Ainsi, on peut voir que des représentants de divers corps de métiers ont transporté sur leur lieu de travail leurs divinités locales, et ont aussi continué à exprimer leur attachement aux dieux de leur région d'origine de diverses façons.[35] A Deir el-Médineh en particulier, on rencontre des oratoires consacrés aux dieux memphites; ce culte est probablement lié au fait que Memphis était un centre de formation pour les artisans spécialisés qui oeuvraient à la construction des tombeaux royaux.[36]

3. *Passer voir le dieu du lieu*

Cependant, lorsqu'il voyage, lorsqu'il passe dans une ville ou près d'un site à la renommée particulière, l'Egyptien peut faire le détour pour visiter le dieu qui y réside.[37] Chaque région a ses dieux; certains lui sont propres tandis que d'autres y sont vénérés sous une forme ou une épithète locale. Le pouvoir d'un dieu local semble se dissoudre lorsqu'on franchit les limites de sa région. C'est donc sous la protection du dieu local de la région dans laquelle il se trouve, que l'Egyptien en déplacement va se placer, et, comme l'a relevé E. Hornung, cet état de fait expliquerait bien que les dieux asiatiques, nubiens, lybiens ont acquis une certaine importance pour les Egyptiens qui étaient appelés à se déplacer hors des frontières de l'Egypte.[38] Cette situation est clairement exprimée par une lettre du Nouvel Empire écrite par un scribe thébain: "Je dirai à Harsaphès Maître d'Hérakléopolis, à Thot Maître d'Hermopolis et à tous les dieux et déesses près desquels je passerai, de te donner vie, pros-

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que l'on affirme parfois que "voir le beauté du visage (du dieu)" revient à voir le soleil: le contact avec le dieu est donc aussi instantané que permanent, puisque la vision en elle-même est rendue possible par la lumière qui émane du soleil. J. Assmann, "Ocular Desire in a Time of Darkness. Urban Festivals and Divine Visibility in Ancient Egypt," Ocular Desire, Yearbook for Religious Anthropology, A.R.E. Agus and J. Assmann (éd.), 1994, p. 13–29.

[34] Malaise, *Histoire des pèlerinages*, p. 68–69.

[35] Voir A. Gasse, "Une influence héliopolitaine dans la science de la construction?", *RdE* 33 (1981):23–28.

[36] Sandman-Holmberg, *The God Ptah*, 233–235; B. Bruyère, *Mert Seger à Deir El Médineh*, MIFAO 58 (Cairo 1930), spécialement p. 5 sq., 15, 48.

[37] Vernus, "Le dieu personnel dans l'Egypte pharaonique," 144.

[38] E. Hornung, *Les dieux de l'Egypte* (Monaco 1986), 150 et note 85 p. 270. Voir aussi 203–205, sur la question du local et du "national."

périté et santé, une longue existence et une longue et bonne vieillesse."[39] Le texte ne dit pas explicitement qu'il faut faire le détour par le sanctuaire lorsque l'on est en voyage; il peut simplement signifier que le passant se met sous la protection du dieu local, ce qui n'implique pas forcément un détour vers son temple, peut-être seulement une prière en pensée. Par contre, on voit que le fidèle peut en voyage songer à ses amis et prier pour eux le dieu local. Une autre attitude, confirmée par plusieurs documents, est la piété "par procuration"; il n'est pas toujours nécessaire de se déplacer soi-même pour faire une offrande à un dieu d'une autre cité, car on peut charger de cette mission une autre personne. Un bon exemple de cette pratique est consigné sur un ostracon de Deir el-Médineh. Il s'agit de livrer un âne dans une autre ville; sur son dos l'animal transporte des dons que son propriétaire destine à la divinité locale du lieu de destination: "envoie-le au sud en portant des offrandes pour Râttaouy."[40]

L'attitude de dévotion envers les dieux locaux est illustrée par des exemples beaucoup plus marquants; lorsque la pratique est royale, elle prend une valeur emblématique. Un exemple frappant est le comportement pieux du pharaon Pi(ânkh)y (XXV^{e} Dynastie) lors de sa reconquête de l'Egypte (729–728 BCE). Sous ses ordres, les troupes éthiopiennes vont défaire les troupes coalisées autour de Tefnakht. La reconquête de Pi(ânkh)y s'inscrit dans la perspective d'une légitimation du pouvoir. Issu d'une dynastie nubienne liée au dieu Amon du Gebel Barkal, Pi(ânkh)y tire de l'histoire reculée de sa région (depuis les campagnes nubiennes de Touthmosis III) le sentiment de véhiculer un passé prestigieux, gage de légitimation. C'est donc avec une attitude respectueuse envers les dieux qu'il part en campagne. Le décret qu'il fit graver à l'occasion de sa victoire[41] nous éclaire sur la piété du roi. Voici comment il s'adresse à son armée:

> Quand vous arriverez dans Thèbes, devant Ipet-Sout, entrez dans l'eau, purifiez-vous dans le fleuve, habillez-vous de lin pur; posez l'arc,

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[39] Pap Leiden I 369; traduction: E. Wente, *Late Ramesside Letters*, SAOC 33 (Chicago 1967), p. 18; texte égyptien: J. Černý, *Late Ramesside Letters*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 9 (1939), pl. I; voir Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 64 n. 9.

[40] S. Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka and Papyri*, Urkunden zum Rechtsleben im alten Ägypten 1 (Tübingen 1973), 180 n° 179 et pl. 42, O. Gardiner n° 140; A.I. Sadek, *Popular Religion in Egypt During the New Kingdom*, HÄB 27 (Hildesheim 1987), 197–8.

[41] N. Grimal, *La stèle triomphale de Pi(ânkh)y au Musée du Caire (JE 48862 et 47086–47089)*, MIFAO 105 (Cairo 1981).

> déposez la flèche, ne vous vantez pas d'être maître de puissance (devant) celui sans l'assentiment de qui le brave est sans puissance (...) Aspergez-vous de l'eau de ses autels. Baisez le sol devant lui et dites ... [suit une prière à Amon afin qu'il accorde la victoire].[42]

Après avoir rejoint son armée, Pi(ânkh)y se livre, en marge de ses victoires militaires, à un véritable pèlerinage dans les sanctuaires principaux du pays. Ainsi à Ity-taoui: "Sa Majesté alla offrir un grand sacrifice aux dieux de cette ville: des boeufs, du bétail sans cornes, toutes choses bonnes et pures."[43] A Memphis, c'est à Ptah, maître des lieux, que s'adresse le roi: "Je voudrais consacrer un sacrifice à Ptah et aux dieux qui résident dans le Mur-Blanc, faire une offrande à Sokaris dans la Chetyt, voir Celui-qui-est-au-sud-de-son-mur ..."[44] La ville fut attaquée; il y eut certainement un carnage (le texte mentionne même le fait que beaucoup de memphites furent massacrés). Une fois la ville prise, Pi(ânkh)y se rend au sanctuaire de Ptah et sacrifie alors à ce dieu. Ensuite, le roi va à Héliopolis pour là aussi sacrifier au dieu local, Ré. Derrière ce programme de pieuses visites, il y a plus que le désir de se concilier les dieux des villes que l'on attaque; il s'agit d'une quête de légitimation, via l'assentiment des grands dieux du pays, prenant la forme d'un pèlerinage individuel.[45] Le cas se reproduira d'ailleurs lorsque Tanoutamon (664–663 BCE) tentera une semblable reconquête (qui ne durera pas).[46]

Pour les Egyptiens, les expéditions hors frontières sont des moments par excellence où l'on fait un détour, s'accordant une pause pour exprimer par une inscription sa piété envers le dieu du lieu.[47] Ainsi, au Sinaï, où les Egyptiens exploitaient des mines, on s'adresse à la déesse locale Hathor; dans les inscriptions qui lui sont consacrées, on n'omettait pas de mentionner que l'on souhaitait revenir sain et sauf au pays.[48] De même, en s'adressant "à ceux qui passeront" près de la dédicace gravée, on souhaite qu'à leur tour, ceux-ci, en lisant la prière, bénéficient de la faveur des dieux.[49]

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[42] Traduction: Grimal, *La stèle triomphale*, 26, 10.5.

[43] Traduction: Grimal, *La stèle triomphale*, 90, 28.11.

[44] Traduction: Grimal, *La stèle triomphale*, 94, 29.10.

[45] Dans ce sens, cf. Grimal, *La stèle triomphale*, 266–268.

[46] Le texte est consigné sur la stèle du Songe de Tanoutamon, voir N. Grimal, *Quatre stèles napatéennes au Musée du Caire (JE 48863–488866)*, MIFAO 106 (Cairo 1981), VII–VIII et p. 3–20; lignes 16–18 (visite au temple de Ptah à Memphis). Pour une traduction, cf *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum* 1, éd. T. Eide, T. Hägg, R.H. Pierce, L. Török (Bergen 1994), 193–210.

[47] Voir D. Devauchelle, "A propos de l'étranger et de ses dieux dans l'univers des anciens Egyptiens", *Scholarly Approaches to Religion*, 179–207, spécialement p. 194.

[48] A.H. Gardiner, T.E. Peet, J. Černý, *The Inscriptions of Sinai (2)*, EES (London 1955), par exemple p. 69 n° 28; p. 73 n° 40.

C. *Lieux et moments de rassemblement*

1. *Se rendre au temple*

Le site de convergence de la population pieuse est le temple, ou plutôt ses abords directs, car, comme on le sait, le temple égyptien est un espace clos, fermé aux fidèles. Pourtant, il saute aux yeux que pèleriner vers un espace fermé qui n'accueille pas les dévots n'est pas gratifiant. La nature du temple égyptien a donné naissance à un phénomène intéressant; les fidèles se pressent vers les murs du temple, et c'est là que leur piété va se développer. Ils tenteront de pallier l'absence effective du dieu, le fait que son image cultuelle reste cachée, par une sorte de sacralisation du mur d'enceinte et des représentations qui pouvaient y figurer. On peut relever à cet égard un témoignage marquant, un bassin à libations (dédié à Ptah) en forme de muraille sur laquelle on a accolé des oreilles,[50] gage de l'écoute du dieu.[51] Sur des stèles du Nouvel Empire qui préfigurent les reliefs cultuels,[52] on observe également des figurations du pylône du temple, des représentations donc de ce qui était possible pour le peuple d'adorer.

Les temples, au coeur des villes, près des marchés (qui avaient lieu sur le dromos), sont par leur topographie même des lieux d'affluence. Ainsi, près des temples, ce ne sont pas seulement des motifs pieux qui attirent les foules. Devant le temple, les prêtres-juges rendent la justice;[53] à cette occasion, on peut facilement supposer que l'on cherchait, via prières ou ex-votos, à se concilier le dieu qui résidait derrière les murs de l'édifice. Une façon originale de transmettre les prières de la population au dieu se fit par l'intercession de statues. Devant une porte de l'enceinte d'Amon à Karnak, des effigies d'Amenhotep fils de Hapou (qui de son vivant fut architecte au service d'Amenhotep III) jouent le rôle d'intercesseurs auprès d'Amon.[54] Sur une des statues, les suppliants ont usé de leur main l'inscription contenue sur le papyrus que tient déplié devant lui Amenhotep. Ce geste de piété est indéniablement transculturel. Les inscriptions de la statue nous renseignent sur la nature de l'objet, ainsi que sur son "public"; après la mention des prêtres, des gens de Karnak, le texte s'adresse aux personnes qui viennent de loin: "O gens de Haute et Basse Egypte, tous ceux (litt: tout-oeil, *irt nbt*) qui voyez le disque, qui venez en descendant ou remontant vers Thèbes pour prier le Maître des dieux, venez à moi: je rapporterai ce que vous direz à Amon d'Ipet-sout."[55] Ce texte laisse entendre que l'on pouvait éventuellement venir de loin pour prier Amon; mais cela n'indique pas, ni n'infirme, que tel était le seul but du voyage. Cette formule entre dans la typologie des appels aux passants, un genre généralement funéraire. L'Egyptien, qui aime à laisser à la postérité une marque de son bon comportement, s'adresse aux passants, qui, en lisant la formule, tout en étant édifiés par une vie exemplaire, contribueront à la survie du défunt dans l'au-delà; ce sont les célèbres "appels aux vivants."[56] Comme on l'a vu, le texte de la statue d'Amenhotep fait clairement référence à des voyageurs; dans le décret d'Horemheb, une notation comparable sur les voyages est formulée: "Les gens du nord remontent le courant, les gens du pays de Kar (Soudan méridional) descendent le courant pour le voir" (à savoir: pour voir le roi).[57] Il s'agit probablement d'une formulation symbolique de l'obédience de la population du pays entier envers le roi.

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[49] Par exemple: Gardiner et al., *The Inscriptions of Sinai*, p. 122 n° 118; p. 148 n° 167.

[50] J. Jaquet et H. Wall-Gordon, "Un bassin à libation du Nouvel Empire dédié à Ptah," *MDAIK* 16 (1958):161–175; Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 44.

[51] Sur ces objets, voir notamment R. Schlichting, s.v. "Ohrenstelen", *LÄ* 4 (1982): 562–566. Egalement A.I. Sadek, *Popular Religion in Egypt during the New Kingdom*, 245–267 et pls. I–XXVIII.; Malaise, *Histoire des pèlerinages*, 70–72.

[52] Voir l'analyse de cette documentation par D. Devauchelle, "Un archétype de relief cultuel en Egypte ancienne", *BSFE* 131 (1994):38–60. Voir également R. Schulman, *Ceremonial Execution and public Rewards. Some Historical Scenes on New Kingdom Private Stelae*, OBO 75 (1988), 8–115.

[53] J. Quaegebeur, "La justice à la porte des temples et le toponyme Premit", *Individu, société et spiritualité dans l'Eypte pharaonique et copte*, Mélanges A. Théodoridès, éd. C. Cannuyer et J.M. Kruchten, (Athens/Bruxelles/Mons 1993), 201–220;

S. Sauneron, "La justice à la porte des temples (à propos du nom égyptien des propylées)", *BIFAO* 54 (1954):117-127.

[54] J. Quaegebeur, "Les 'saints' égyptiens préchrétiens," 33–34.

[55] Urk. IV, 1833 12–16; Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 42–43.

[56] Sur cette formule, voir J. Sainte Fare Garnot, *L'appel aux vivants dans les textes funéraires égyptiens des origines à la fin de l'Ancien Empire*, RAPH 9 (Cairo 1938). Il est fréquent que dans ces formules on s'adresse à un public large , par exemple: "ô vivants qui êtes sur terre (qui passerez près de cette tombe), soit en descendant le courant soit en le remontant" (op. cit., p. 63–4; Urk. I, 116.7). Cette phraséologie est banale, et les nombreuses variantes procèdent donc d'un même stéréotype.

[57] Urk. IV, 2142 5–6. Ce fragment n'est pas repris dans l'édition de J.-M. Kruchten.

C'est à la Basse Epoque que l'on trouve des mentions plus explicites se référant à des sanctuaires où l'on vient de loin dans un but thérapeutique. Sur une statue placée en un lieu de culte d'Imhotep à Saqqarah (XXX^{e} dynastie), figure un appel aux visiteurs éventuels, qui, dans ce cas, sont explicitement venus pour implorer le dieu:

> O, tout serviteur-du-dieu, tout prêtre-ouâb, tout dignitaire, tout homme qui venez des provinces et des villes pour implorer la vie au maître de vie, pour qu'il donne un fils à celui qui le demande, une femme à celui qui supplie pour cela et qui guérit tout enfant malade ...[58]

Il est difficile cependant de savoir dans ce cas si l'on a affaire à un pèlerinage local (villes et provinces des alentours), ou plus étendu.

Lorsque l'Egyptien se rend au temple, il peut laisser des traces de son passage: on trouve ainsi des graffitis, des objets votifs,[59] voire une petite stèle, qui témoignent de visites au sanctuaire. On aime ainsi à marquer le moment de son passage. Un simple objet déposé commémore une visite, mais de façon anonyme, et accompagnait sûrement une prière aujourd'hui imperceptible. Corollairement, à travers la pratique du graffiti, on perçoit une constante de l'esprit égyptien: le désir de laisser son nom, de s'associer à un dieu, d'être présent sur un site, dans la pérennité de la marque laissée par l'écriture. Cette idée rejoint la croyance en l'efficience de l'écriture, en la valeur de la préservation du nom. A cet égard, les statues dites "gardiennes de portes" (analysées par J.-J. Clère) sont particulièrement intéressantes.[60] Dans ce cas, l'offrant a dédié au dieu une statue où, par l'inscription, il se désigne comme portier, souhaitant donc rester à jamais en fonction dans le temple du dieu: "... accorde moi de demeurer dans ton temple, et accorde que je reste indemne à ses portes, sans y être déplacé de côté et d'autre."[61]

D'autre part, on se souviendra que la pratique de la procuration était certainement bien répandue. Si l'on se trouvait empêché d'aller au temple pour y prier le dieu, ou consulter son oracle, on pouvait confier cette charge à un proche. Un exemple intéressant de cette attitude est confirmé par une lettre de la fin de la XX^e^ Dynastie, où un dévot, constatant que le dieu reste caché au fond de son sanctuaire et qu'il n'y a pas accès en personne, confie alors à l'un de ses amis, un scribe du temple en question, sa requête au dieu.[62]

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[58] D. Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep. Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten*, MÄS 36 (1977) p. 43; texte hiéroglyphique: A. Wiedemann, *Rec Trav.* 6 (1885):121–122. Texte comparable (Brooklyn L 68.10.1, Wildung, op. cit., p. 44–45 et taf. VII).

[59] Sur cette documentation, H. Brunner, s.v. "Votivgaben," *LÄ* 6 (1986):1077–1081. Voir aussi G. Pinch, *Votive offerings to Hathor* (Oxford 1993), spécialemment chap. 3.3 "Deity and donors", 349–355.

[60] J.-J. Clère, "Deux statues 'gardiennes de porte' d'époque ramesside", *JEA* 54 (1968):135–148.

[61] Traduction J.-J. Clère, "Deux statues," 139.

Le problème majeur et constant réside dans le fait que généralement on ne dispose que de trop peu d'informations pour connaître le lieu d'origine du fidèle: il est souvent impossible de déterminer si le fidèle est venu de loin, s'il s'agit d'un réel "pèlerin", ou s'il n'a eu que quelques mètres à faire pour se rendre au temple. Les indices de passage n'offrent pas toujours un terrain facile pour cette enquête. Un objet votif reste généralement anonyme. Si le fidèle mentionne son nom, le critère onomastique ne suffit pas à déterminer sa provenance. A Karnak, par exemple, sur 1428 graffiti répertoriés, l'on ne trouve mention que de 186 noms ou titres de personnes, qui sont majoritairement des scribes ou des membre du personnel local;[63] ces chiffres infirment l'idée de pèlerinage vers ce temple, pourtant lieu d'élection du grand dieu Amon. A Thèbes, comme on le verra, il faut changer de rive pour trouver une documentation intéressant notre sujet. Quoi qu'il en soit, les sondages effectués pour déterminer l'origine des graveurs de graffiti que l'on trouve dans les temples montrent que, dans une large mesure, il s'agit de locaux.[64] Enfin, les visiteurs peuvent également laisser des marques anonymes de leur piété. C. Traunecker a consacré une étude aux cupules laissées sur les monuments;[65] pour lui, leurs auteurs, les gens du peuple illettrés, se livraient peut-être par cette pratique à un rite de magie guérisseuse. En prélevant un peu de la substance du temple, chargée de la puissance des dieux qui y résidaient, on pouvait ensuite avec la poudre récoltée confectionner un breuvage magique. Tout au moins, car il n'y a jamais de preuves définitives pour ce type de pratique anonyme, marquait-on ainsi son passage.

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[62] J. Barns, "The Nevill Papyrus: a late Ramesside Letter to an Oracle", *JEA* 35 (1949):69–71; E. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt* (Altanta 1990), 219. Il y a dans ce cas à la fois procuration et médiation.

[63] Cl. Traunecker, "Manifestations de piété personnelle à Karnak", *BSFE* 85 (1979):22–31.

[64] Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 23.

[65] C. Traunecker, "Une pratique de magie populaire dans les temples de Karnak", dans *La Magia in Egitto ai tempi dei Faraoni*, ed. A. Roccati et A. Siliotti (Milano 1987), 221–242.

2. *Les fêtes*

Les moments de rassemblement sont par excellence les fêtes. Très nombreuses dans l'année égyptienne, on en tient des calendriers. Certaines manifestations sont locales, comme la fête d'Opet à Thèbes ou la fête de la Vallée à Thèbes, d'autres concernent un ensemble de localités, comme la fête où Hathor de Dendera rend visite à Horus d'Edfou. Il est très probable que certaines fêtes occasionnaient des grands rassemblements de population. Hérodote, qui voyagea en Egypte au V^e siècle BCE, peut en parler; son évocation des fêtes de Bubastis est célèbre: "... Parvenus à Bubastis, ils (les Egyptiens) fêtent la déesse avec de grands sacrifices, et l'on boit plus de vin de raisin pendant cette solennité que pendant tout le reste de l'année. Il s'y rend, tant hommes que femmes (sans compter les petits enfants) quelque sept cent mille personnes selon les gens du pays."[66] Un tel rassemblement n'est pas attesté par les sources égyptiennes; sans doute y a-t-il une portée symbolique derrière le chiffre rapporté par Hérodote, tout au moins l'expression d'une multitude innombrable. Comme on le voit, fêtes et réjouissances vont de pair, encore que l'évocation d'une forte consommation alcoolique peut également évoquer un comportement rituel.[67] Hérodote mentionne encore d'autres fêtes, mais sans donner d'estimation chiffrée de la population qui s'y rend.[68]

Diverses sources, essentiellement de Basse Epoque, attestent des déplacements de population ou d'individus à buts pieux, notamment pour assister à des fêtes. Une stèle funéraire tardive mentionne de façon plus détaillée qu'à l'accoutumée les catégories de personnes pouvant être amenées à passer devant le monument d'un certain Gemnefhorbak:[69]

> O notables et serviteurs, embaumeurs, chefs des mystères, hommes qui déposez des offrandes en tant que prêtres-ouâb, et tous les hommes qui s'avancent sur les chemins, qui viennent à cette nécropole, qui

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[66] Hérodote II.60; traduction A. Barguet, *Hérodote*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris 1964), 166.

[67] J.-C. Goyon, "Hathor, l'ivraie, l'ivresse", *Bulletin du cercle lyonnais d'égyptologie Victor Loret* 8 (1992):7–16.

[68] Outre les fêtes de Boubastis, Hérodote cite les fêtes de Bousiris, de Saïs, d'Héliopolis, de Bouto (II.59 et 61–63).

[69] E. Drioton, *Les fêtes de Bouto*, BIE 25 (Cairo 1943), 1–19. Drioton voit en l'auteur un égyptien érudit ayant plus au moins pastiché en langue égyptienne de tradition un poème alexandrin.

> s'avancent vers cette rampe, qui vont à Imet le jour de la pleine lune pour demander la vie auprès de la Dorée et pour voir Ouadjet, dont le visage devient clément en accordant des enfants aux visiteurs(?) [cf. note 71 pour ce terme que Drioton traduit par "pèlerin"] qui viennent de la campagne du dieu lorsque les plantes verdoient pour adorer pendant la fête d'Horus (...) Citoyens de Imet et serviteurs qui allez et venez pour baiser la poussière dans le Temple du Silence, devenu antichambre de tombeau, tandis que le roi monte vers Akhet au temps de la famine, et que les suppliants(?) [cf. note 71] descendent vers Min et vont en procession vers Celui qui préside à la Campagne (...): prononcez mon nom![70]

Cette évocation est certes toute littéraire, et ne correspond peut-être pas à une réalité observée. Cependant, elle stylise tout de même assez bien les catégories de visiteurs. On remarquera que les deux termes que Drioton a traduits par "pèlerin" (*snb, d͟3b*) sont trop vagues pour que l'on admette qu'ils désignent expressément ce type de pieux visiteurs.[71]

Enfin, on ne saurait oublier de mentionner que les dieux font eux-mêmes, en quelque sorte, des pèlerinages, tant locaux que plus lointains. Les statues divines, comme on l'a vu, sont parfois appelées à sortir du temple, pour que le dieu rende visite à un autre sanctuaire ou à un autre dieu. La distance parcourue peut être plus au moins longue. Par exemple, Amon de Karnak peut sortir pour aller à Louqsor tout proche, ou, à l'occasion de la Fête de la Vallée, traverser le Nil pour se rendre sur la rive ouest de Thèbes. À sa suite, les Thébains vont visiter leurs morts, et en profitent, comme nous le verrons ci-dessous, pour effectuer un petit pèlerinage local à Hathor de Deir el-Bahari. Les textes ptolémaïques du temple d'Edfou décrivent la navigation qui conduit Hathor de Dendera jusqu'à Horus d'Edfou. Le personnel sacré de Dendera embarquait avec la déesse, sous les ordres d'un fonctionnaire délégué par le roi pour veiller à la bonne marche du pèlerinage divin. L'arrivée à Edfou était saluée par la population assemblée, certainement dans un climat proche de celui décrit par Hérodote, population à laquelle se joignaient certainement des fidèles venus de régions plus éloignées (oasis du désert libyque ou nomes voisins).[72]

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[70] Traduction d'après Drioton, *Les fêtes de Bouto.*

[71] Comme le suggère Droton, *snbw* (pluriel ou collectif) est peut-être à rapprocher de *snbb* "rendre visite" (*Wb* IV.161), et *d͟3bw* du verbe *d͟3b* "saluer" (*Wb* V.522).

[72] M. Alliot, *Le culte d'Horus à Edfou au temps des Ptolémées*, BdE 20, 2 (Cairo 1954), 447–448. Voir aussi le "pèlerinage" des dieux lors des fêtes d'Esna, cf. S. Sauneron, *Les fêtes religieuses d'Esna aux derniers siècles du paganisme*, Esna 5 (Cairo 1962), 49 sq.

D. *La question abydénienne*

1. *Le site*

Il nous faut à présent revenir au Moyen Empire pour examiner le dossier concernant les pèlerinages abydéniens. L'existence d'un réel pèlerinage à Abydos et de sa portée effective au sein de la population a déjà fait couler passablement d'encre.[73] Abydos est un centre de culte particulièrement important d'Osiris. Le site actuel comprend notamment le temple de Sethi Ier et son cénotaphe royal, l'Osireion, construction étonnante épousant l'apparence d'un tombeau du dieu, un temple de Ramses II, une nécropole remontant au prédynastique, et les nécropoles privées du Moyen Empire et du Nouvel Empire. La ville, explicitement depuis le Nouvel Empire, affirme détenir la plus précieuse des reliques: la tête coupée du dieu Osiris, démembré par Seth. Des représentations montrent le visage du dieu Osiris dans ce que l'on appelle le reliquaire abydénien.[74] Cet objet, qui est attesté dès l'époque thinite, donc avant l'implantation du culte d'Osiris à Abydos, ne devait pas à l'origine être destiné à contenir la tête du dieu; il s'agit d'une réinterprétation osirienne d'un motif plus ancien.[75] En outre, on pouvait admirer à Abydos un tombeau d'Osiris, en fait la tombe d'un souverain archaïque (ce qu'est justement Osiris dans les conceptions égyptiennes),[76] et on y célébrait en grande pompe les "mystères" du dieu, fête majeure du calendrier égyptien. Aussi, au moins dès le Moyen Empire, les gens de la région se pressent autour du sanctuaire (remanié constamment par les rois successifs), et laissent comme marque de leur croyance des stèles (sur lesquels nous reviendrons ci-dessous) et même des petits cénotaphes. Le site enfin est un lieu de passage important, au débouché des routes des oasis de Kharga et Dakhla.[77] Ainsi, reliques, monuments particulièrement sacrés, fêtes religieuses prestigieuses, présence d'un dieu majeur et lié à des espérances pour l'au-delà, apparaîtraient aisément comme constitutifs d'une définition standard d'un site de pèlerinage.

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[73] Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 33–40. Sur l'activité religieuse du site, cf. R. David, *A guide to religious ritual at Abydos* (Warminster 1981).

[74] Cf. A.M. Calverley, *The temple of the King Sethos I at Abydos*, 3 (London/Chicago 1938), pl. 6. et p. VIII.

[75] H.E. Winlock, *Bas-reliefs from the Temple of Rameses I at Abydos*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers (New York 1921), 15–27; B. Bruyère, *Rapports sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1934–35)*, FIFAO 16 (Cairo 1939), 175–192; H. Beinlich, *Die "Osirisreliquien": zum Motiv der Körperzerliederung in der altägyptische Religion*, ÄgAbh 42 (Wiesbaden 1984), 22–224.

[76] J. Gwyn Griffiths, *LÄ* IV (1982):630 (s.v. "Osirisgrab").

[77] M. Valloggia, "This sur la route des oasis," *BIFAO (Livre du Centenaire)* 100 (1981):185–190.

2. *Témoignages d'officiels en mission et de "pèlerins"*

Depuis l'étude de J. Yoyotte, plusieurs travaux marquants sur Abydos sont à relever. Il faut tout d'abord citer l'étude de W. Simpson, qui s'applique à reconstituer les chapelles privées que les Egyptiens dressaient "sur la rampe du grand dieu."[78] Miriam Lichtheim a également réexaminé la question de la portée réelle du pèlerinage à Abydos.[79] Selon son analyse, on peut classer en trois catégories les nombreuses stèles trouvées à Abydos pour l'époque du Moyen Empire: stèles élevées par des habitants de la région, par des officiels en mission, et enfin par des "pèlerins" (les guillemets sont de M. Lichtheim), à savoir des personnes venues à Abydos de leur propre initiative, notamment pour participer aux fêtes d'Osiris.[80]

Dès le Moyen Empire, des stèles nous indiquent que des officiels, passant par Abydos, y ont laissé une marque commémorative de leur piété. Dans les exemples qui vont suivre, on verra que ces "pèlerins" occasionnels n'omettent pas de mentionner le fait qu'ils ont voyagé; souvent, c'est par ordre royal que ces fonctionnaires sont allés à Abydos, pour accomplir diverses tâches, certaines de nature religieuse. En rappelant ce voyage dans leur stèle "autobiographique", ces fonctionnaires commémorent un honneur. Retenons quelques documents révélateurs; tous sont des textes d'offrandes dédiés à Osiris.

Mery, sous Sésostris Ier, fut envoyé à Abydos pour travailler à la construction du temple d'Osiris, en raison de la confiance que le roi lui témoigne, comme sa stèle le rappelle.[81] Un sculpteur précise qu'il est venu à Abydos pour travailler alors qu'il pratiquait précédemment dans une ville différente.[82] Un autre fonctionnaire affirme qu'il est venu de Thèbes pour une mission dans les oasis; passant par Abydos, il s'y arrête pour consacrer au dieu une stèle.[83] Plusieurs documents révèlent la nature religieuse de la mission, comme la stèle d'Ikhernofret, célèbre pour sa description des mystères d'Osiris; c'est un ordre du roi Sésostris III qui l'a conduit à se rendre à Abydos: "Ma majesté a ordonné que (tu) remontes vers le nome Thinite d'Abydos, pour ériger un monument à mon père Osiris Khenty-Imentyou, et pour orner son image secrète avec de l'or fin ..."[84] Le texte reproduit l'ordre du roi, qui se conclut par les mots "va et retourne après avoir fait tout ce que Ma Majesté a ordonné" (l. 8–9). Comme d'autres dignitaires, Ikhernofret fut envoyé à Abydos pour prendre part aux mystères d'Osiris. Le texte consigné par un autre haut fonctionnaire, chargé par le roi Amenemhat II d'une tournée d'inspection des sanctuaires de Haute Egypte, est significatif de l'attitude d'un officiel en mission:[85]

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[78] W. Simpson, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos: The Offering Chapels of Dynasties 12 and 13*, Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition to Egypt Publications 5 (New Haven/ Philadelphia 1974). Voir également: G. Andreu, "La stèle Louvre C. 249: un complément à la reconstitution d'une chapelle abydénienne," *BIFAO* 80 (1980):138–147.

[79] M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies chiefly of the Middle Kingdom. A study and an anthology*, OBO 84 (1988). Voir spécialement les chapitres: "officials on mission" (84–100); "pilgrims," 101–128.

[80] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies*, 65.

[81] Pour la bibliographie et la traduction, cf. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies*, 85–88, n° 36 (Louvre C 3), l. 4–6.

[82] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies*, 90–92, n° 38 (Los Angeles County Museum).

> J'allais jusqu'à Elephantine conformément à ce qui m'était ordonné et je me prosternai devant Khnoum, seigneur de la Cataracte. Je revins par la route où j'étais passé. J'ai jeté l'amarre à Abydos. J'ai laissé mon nom à l'endroit où est le dieu Osiris-Khenty-Imentyou, seigneur de l'Eternité et souverain de l'Occident, (lieu) vers lequel vient tout ce qui existe, afin que je sois glorifié parmi les suivants du maître de vie.[86]

Parfois, c'est en raison d'un désir pieux du roi que l'on envoie un délégué à Abydos. Ainsi le roi Neferhotep I^{er} (XIII^{e} Dynastie) se prend-il d'un intérêt particulier pour les anciennes écritures; la consultation d'une bibliothèque de temple le pousse à faire acte de piété. Désirant rendre hommage à Osiris, il fait appeler un courtisan:

> Voyage donc en remontant le courant vers le sud (avec) une équipe d'ouvriers. Ne dors ni la nuit ni le jour jusqu'à ce que tu arrives à Abydos. Je veux faire sortir Khenty-Imentyou en procession; puis je ferai son monument comme (lors de) la première fois. Alors ce courtisan dit: "Comme est beau ce que tu dis, ô prince, mon Seigneur. Je

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[83] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies*, 93–94, n° 39 (Berlin 1199).

[84] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies*, 98–100, n° 42 (Berlin 1204), l. 3–4. Il arrive bien sûr aussi que le roi donne l'ordre à un fonctionnaire de participer à une fête religieuse dans une ville différente; par exemple, le dignitaire Nebouâiou qui fut chargé de quitter Thèbes pour participer aux fêtes de Min, voir H. Gauthier, *Les fêtes du dieu Min*, RAPH 2, (Cairo 1931), 16 (= Urk. IV, 209 3–6).

[85] Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 38; texte égyptien: *HTBM* 2 (1912), pl. 8–9.

[86] Traduction: Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 38.

> ferai ton monument à Abydos pour ton père Khenty-Imentyou". Ce dignitaire voyagea donc en remontant le courant vers le sud (conformément à) ce que lui avait ordonné Sa Majesté. Il arriva (à Abydos) afin de faire apparaître en gloire (ce dieu) ...[87]

Certaines stèles témoignent par ailleurs de pèlerinages apparemment spontanés. Avec ce type de documents, nous sommes amenés à envisager le pèlerinage à Abydos comme un acte religieux individuel et libre, à la différence des voyages commandités des officiels qui laissèrent à cette occasion une marque de leur piété. Cet acte personnel, vu la nature du dieu Osiris et de ce que le fidèle peut attendre de lui, contribuait probablement à assurer au dévot une place de choix dans l'au-delà. Il faut remarquer, à la suite de M. Lichtheim, que la visite ne semble pas apporter un profit au fidèle de son vivant. Il s'agit de laisser un témoignage, une stèle funéraire qui remplira son rôle après la mort du dédicant; on va à Abydos pour laisser une marque de sa présence auprès d'Osiris. Le meilleur exemple de pèlerinage spontané, le seul vraiment explicite d'ailleurs, est celui d'un certain Ankhou, qui se rendit à Abydos à la XII^{e} Dynastie.[88] La courte inscription de sa stèle est assez originale:

> L'honoré Ankhou dit: je suis un brave qui frappe (même) un plus brave que lui, qui saisit le souffle du ciel (en) paix; je suis assis à l'avant de ma maison, le bout d'un papyrus à la main. J'ai fait cette stèle après que je sois venu pour vénérer le monument d'Osiris, maître d'Abydos, maître de la Terre Sacrée.

Malheureusement, si nous voyons ici confirmée l'existence du déplacement individuel pour aller honorer Osiris, nous ne savons rien de la provenance du personnage. Peut-être ne vient-il que de la région immédiate, en un pèlerinage local. Ce qui est sûr, c'est la valeur d'une stèle de ce type aux yeux des Egyptiens. Ainsi celle que laissa Montououser est un don du roi, probablement pour récompenser un sujet particulièrement fidèle.[89] On ne sait pas si Montououser est allé en personne à Abydos où s'il fit envoyer sa stèle. En effet, il existe une intéressante pratique consistant à effectuer en quelque sorte ce pèlerinage par procuration. La stèle de Nebipousenouseret, à l'époque d'Amenemhat III, le confirme clairement. Gravée à la résidence royale du nord, elle fut donnée à la charge de prêtres se rendant au sud de l'Egypte: "Cette stèle a remonté le courant vers le sud avec le prêtre-lecteur en chef Ibi, lorsque que la prêtrise du temple fut venue pour voir le roi à sa fête parfaite d'éternité."[90]

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[87] W. Helck, *Historisch-Biographische Texte der zweite Zwischenzeit und neue Texte der 18. Dynastie*, KÄT (1975), 23–24 (l. 13–14); bibliographie, 21.

[88] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies*, 103–104 et 101, n° 43. Voir aussi B. Van de Walle, "Une stèle égyptienne du Moyen Empire au Musée Curtius de Liège", *Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales III – volume offert à J. Capart* (1935):563–574.

[89] Lichteim, *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies*, 104–105, n° 44 (Metropolitan Museum 12.184).

Comme nous le montrent les différents documents retenus, ainsi que la majorité de la documentation, le pèlerinage à Abydos est une possibilité offerte à qui passe dans la région, à qui y habite. Les vrais "pèlerins", motivés individuellement à se rendre par piété à Abydos, sont beaucoup plus rares. Dans la masse des stèles abydéniennes, les sondages pour déterminer l'origine des dédicants n'attestent que de façon infime la présence de personnes venues de loin.[91] La foule qui se presse autour du sanctuaire est surtout celle des gens de la ville et des environs. Le pèlerinage en Abydos concerne sûrement une espérance liée à l'au-delà, mais n'apparaît pas comme une condition nécessaire pour être admis auprès d'Osiris dans l'autre monde. C'est une option, une occasion à saisir, mais certainement pas une obligation. L'attrait de la ville sacrée d'Osiris ne s'exerça donc pas sur les foules des provinces lointaines. Mais à l'occasion, le libre arbitre et les moyens de chacun peut laisser envisager une visite.

Au Nouvel Empire, le site ne perd pas de son aura. Bien au contraire, dès cette époque, on vénère comme tombe d'Osiris une sépulture prédynastique, la tombe du roi Djer.[92] Dans ce périmètre, une foule d'objets votifs témoignent des visites effectuées à ce site. On peut penser que la tombe d'Osiris est une étape dans le parcours des mystères du dieu. Si à Basse Epoque différentes villes finiront par prétendre détenir en relique une partie du dieu démembré, l'Egypte devenant ainsi quadrillée par un réseau de tombes d'Osiris, Abydos, en conservant la tête du dieu, restera en tout cas un site osirien d'élection. Les différents souverains poursuivent une politique de construction et de réfection de sanctuaires.[93] Les notables de passage ne manquent pas de dédier à Osiris une stèle; ainsi sous Ramsès II, Mahou, prêtre à Héliopolis et Youpa, prêtre thébain, en mission à Abydos, dédient à Osiris une stèle commune.[94] A la Basse Epoque, des textes continuent d'attester que des officiels en mission ou de passage laissent à Abydos des témoignages de leur piété envers Osiris.[95] On peut citer notamment l'exemple de Neshor, natif du Delta, haut fonctionnaire dans l'Egypte Saïte.[96]

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[90] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian autobiographies*, 122–124, n° 56 (BM 101), B l. 8–9.

[91] Les étrangers repérables sont signalés par Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 38.

[92] Cf. *LÄ* s.v "Osirisgrab."

[93] Reconstruction du temple d'Osiris au Nouvel Empire, voir B. Kemp, "The Osiris temple at Abydos", *MDAIK* 23 (1968):138–155, spécialement 140–148.

E. *L'intérêt pour le passé*

A partir du Nouvel Empire, des inscriptions commémorent les visites de sites fameux dans un but généralement pieux, encore que l'on ne puisse à coup sûr tracer une frontière nette entre visiteur curieux et dévot. Une des caractéristiques de ces visites réside dans le choix d'un monument ancien comme site d'attraction. Ce phénomène s'inscrit dans la large problématique de l'intérêt manifeste des Egyptiens pour leur passé, mais pose aussi la question de l'accessibilité des lieux cultuels. De nombreux exemples pourraient être évoqués pour illustrer l'attrait du passé prestigieux, et cela à divers niveaux de la civilisation pharaonique: la valeur des écrits anciens, notamment en matière religieuse, le goût pour les fables dont l'intrigue se situe dans un passé plus ou moins mythifié, la politique architecturale des pharaons dont le pieux souci de réfection des monuments anciens se manifeste continuellement. Ce regard vers le passé apparaît en fait comme une disposition de l'esprit égyptien, dont le conservatisme éclate notoirement dans l'écriture hiéroglyphique elle-même, transcrivant une langue de tradition distincte du langage courant. Effectivement, le passé est foncièrement bénéfique, puisque la conception historique des Egyptiens conçoit leur société comme issue d'un "âge d'or" où les dieux régnaient sur terre, et que le pharaon régnant est leur successeur et leur incarnation fonctionnelle. Plus précisément, il se trouve que l'on va parfois directement puiser aux sources, comme à l'époque saïte où l'on se plaît à la copie littérale et au pastiche du passé.[97] On a évoqué, dès le Nouvel Empire, la renaissance de la conscience du passé liée à un besoin de ressourcer une Egypte dont les frontières, conséquence d'une politique de conquête, s'élargissent.[98] La légitimation par le passé est fondamentale de l'idéologie royale. Les Ramessides ont ainsi un fort sens de la lignée, des ancêtres, et donc un intérêt intrinsèque pour le passé. Exemple notoire, Khaemouaset, fils de Ramsès II, le prince que l'on a qualifié de "premier égyptologue", lance un programme de réfection de sites anciens, notamment dans la région memphite.[99] On remarquera que l'attention de Khaemouaset se focalise notamment sur les nécropoles (Giza-Saqqara). Aussi, une fois encore, les attitudes personnelles que l'on observe sur ces sites entretiennent avec l'idéologie royale ce rapport d'inspiration et de récupération mutuelles que l'on a déjà évoqué.

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[94] Sadek, *Popular Religion in Egypt*, 197; KRI III, p. 444 (Turin 1465).

[95] Comme Peftuaneith à qui Amasis confia la charge de mener à Abydos des travaux de restaurations d'édifices religieux, texte consigné sur une statue naophore (Louvre A 93), traduction et bibliographie: M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* 3 (Berkeley 1980), 33–36. Voir également sur ce texte et en général sur les cultes à Abydos à cette époque A. Leahy, "The Date of Louvre A 93," *GM* 70 (1984):45–58.

[96] O. Perdu, "Socle d'une statue de Neshor à Abydos," *RdE* 43 (1992):145–162, spécialement 161–162. Sur ce personnage, voir aussi O. Perdu, "Neshor à Mendés sous Apriès," *BSFE* 118 (1990):38–49; P. Vernus, "Une statue de Neshor surnommé Psamétik-Menkhib," *RdE* 42 (1991):241–249.

F. *Visiteurs pieux du Nouvel Empire*

Cet intérêt "archéologique" pour le passé est confirmé par les inscriptions laissées par les visiteurs qui, au Nouvel Empire, allaient admirer les merveilles du passé.[100] Si le mot "pèlerin" convient assez mal pour décrire ces visiteurs, le terme de "touriste" serait également mal adapté. Vraisemblablement, dans l'éducation des scribes, ces visites occupent une place dans un cursus et répondent à un souci de piété. Un formulaire, constamment répété, enlève souvent à ces dédicaces la spontanéité d'une admiration que l'on sent tout de même sincère, mais nous montre que les visiteurs connaissaient par coeur une formule consacrée. Ce formulaire nous indique que l'on est "venu pour voir" le site (*jwt pw jr.n N r m33*), qu'on l'a trouvé plaisant (*gm.n.N sy nfr ḥr jb.f*); suivent généralement des formules d'admiration stéréotypées apprises par coeur. Cette phraséologie des graffitis est typique d'un style littéraire qui était enseigné aux jeunes scribes en leurs écoles (que l'on pense à cet égard aux formules toutes faites de la "Kémit").[101] Dans chaque région, les visites ont pour but des vestiges du passé. A Thèbes, on visite de vieilles tombes, depuis longtemps ouvertes à tous les vents: par exemple, la tombe du vizir Antefoqer (XIIe Dynastie), qu'un visiteur mal renseigné, peut-être induit en erreur par le nom de la belle-mère du vizir, la dénommée Sisobek, prend pour la tombe de la reine Sobek-néférou-Ré.[102] Dans une large mesure, ces inscriptions commémorent la visite de locaux. Mais il est tout de même important de voir derrière ces manifestations la constitution d'une Egypte de monuments fameux, attirant de pieux visiteurs. Il est pourtant plus difficile de déterminer quelle est la nature exacte de cette piété. Il peut s'agir, comme l'écrit J. Yoyotte "d'un pèlerinage aux sources", essentiellement réservé à des intellectuels, à savoir les scribes. On peut aussi remarquer que les sites choisis pour ces visites sont en marge des temples officiels, qui, comme on l'a vu, ne sont pas destinés à recevoir les fidèles qui se cantonnent à leurs abords. Des sites comme le Sphinx, les pyramides, les nécropoles anciennes, constituent à cette époque des ensembles religieux relevant du passé, passablement ruinés, qui ne sont plus liés à des cultes d'Etat et qui, désertés par les prêtres en service, deviennent ainsi ouverts et directement accessibles aux visiteurs.

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[97] Importante bibliographie sur le sujet; à propos de l'archaïsme saïte, voir récemment P. der Manuelian, *Living in the past. Studies in archaism of the Egyptian 26th dynasty*, Studies in Egyptology (London 1994), spécialement 1–59.

[98] Pour cette question et ce qui suit, cf. D. Redford, *Pharaonic King-lists, Annals and Days-books. A contribution to the study of the Egyptian Sense of History*, SSEA publication 4 (Mississauga 1986), spécialement 166–176 (renaissance à la XVIII^{e} dynastie) et sur les Ramessides, 190 sq.

[99] Sur le personnage, voir F. Gomaa, *Chaemwese, Sohn Ramses' II und Hohenpriester von Memphis*, ÄgAbh 27 (Wiesbaden 1973); ajouter les remarques de M. Gitton, compte rendu de F. Gomaa, *Chaemwese*, *CdE* 51 (1976):296.

[100] Sur ce type d'inscription, voir W. Helck, "Die Bedeutung der ägyptischen Besucherinschriften," *ZDMG* 102 (1952):39–56; D. Wildung, s.v. "Besucherinschriften," *LÄ* 1 (1975):766–767 et Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 49–53.

1. *Dans la nécropole memphite*

Plusieurs sites antiques de la nécropole memphite furent l'objet de visites au Nouvel Empire. A Abousir, on se rendait au temple funéraire du roi Sahouré (Ve Dynastie). A la XVIIIe Dynastie, les scribes memphites visitaient les ruines de ce complexe funéraire. Leurs inscriptions sont empreintes d'une phraséologie de circonstance, comparant avec emphase le site à quelque merveille céleste, et appelant à une pluie de myrrhe bienfaisante sur le temple; le but de la visite semble en partie consister en un acte de piété envers cet ancien roi, en perpétuant un culte funéraire depuis longtemps oublié.[103] Toujours à la XVIII^e Dynastie, la même phraséologie, la même motivation, est attestée par une inscription du site de Meidum, où l'on va admirer la pyramide de Snéfrou:

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[101] M. Megally, "Two visitors' graffiti from Abûsir," *CdE* 56 (1981), 240, cite à ce propos un ostraka contenant le début de la formule (*jwt pw jr.n sš N r m33*), qui est peut-être un excercice scolaire, cf. W.C. Hayes, *Ostraka and name stones from the tomb of Sen-Mut (n° 71) at Thebes*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition (New York 1942), pl. XX n° 97 et p. 25.

[102] N. de Garis Davies et A.H. Gardiner, *The tomb of Antefoker vizier of Sesostris I and of his wife Senet* (London 1920), pl. xxv.3. La tombe consigne 36 inscriptions de visiteurs (pl. xxv–xxxvii); autre exemple d'une erreur (éventuelle dans ce cas) à Béni Hassan dans la tombe de Khnoum-hotep, qu'un visiteur confond avec Khéops, cf. Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 72, note 111.

> Le 12e jour du 4e mois d'été, 41e année du règne de Thoutmès III, le scribe Âakheperêsêneb, fils d'Amenmesou (scribe et ritualiste du défunt roi Thoutmès I^{er}) est venu voir le magnifique temple du roi Snéfrou. Il le trouva comme si le ciel était en lui et comme si le soleil se levait en lui. Alors il dit: "Puisse le ciel pleuvoir de la myrrhe fraîche, puisse-t-il couler de l'encens sur le toit du temple du roi Snéfrou."[104]

Dans certains cas, la visite n'est pas seulement un acte de piété envers un roi disparu, mais relève bien d'une piété personnelle envers une divinité locale. A Abousir, dans les ruines du complexe funéraire de Sahouré, un culte populaire dédié à la déesse Sekhmet prit naissance, probablement autour d'une ancienne représentation de la déesse lionne.[105] Un clergé local se constitua même. On s'y rendait en excursion. Ainsi, sous Ramsès II, un scribe et son fils, venant de Memphis laissent une commémoration de leur visite sur un mastaba adjacent:

> L'an 50, premier mois de la saison prt, le 16e jour. Le scribe Ptah-em-ouia et (son) père le scribe Ioupa sont venus pour voir l'ombre des pyramides, après qu'ils soient allés en chantant pour faire offrande (...) à la Sekhmet de Sahouré, en ce jour, ayant écrit (...): fais un bienfait, fais un bienfait (*ir nfr ir nfr*), Sekhmet de Sahouré, pour le scribe Ptah-em-ouia et le scribe Ioupa ...[106]

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[103] Voir Megally, "Two visitors' graffiti from Abûsir," 218–240.

[104] W. Flinders Petrie, *Medum*, ERA (London 1892), 40. I.E.S. Edwards, *Les pyramides d'Egypte*, (rééd. Paris 1992), 99–100.

[105] Sur la Sekhmet de Sahouré, voir Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 49–50; voir la note n° 100 p. 71 pour la biliographie des fouilles. Lire également S.E. Hoenes, *Untersuchungen zu Wesen und Kult der Göttin Sachmet* (Habelts Dissertationsdrucke, Bonn, 1976), 113–118.

[106] Texte: KRI III, 437; traduction de l'inscription: Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 57–58.

A Saqqara, on visite également les pyramides de Djéser, de Téti. Un scribe consigne qu'il est venu pour se divertir (*sḏ3y-ḥr*). Il n'oublie cependant pas de transformer cette promenade en une pieuse visite, puisque dans son inscription il rend grâce aux dieux de la Nécropole.[107] Un autre scribe, Nachouyou, implore les rois Djéser et Téti par la formule consacrée "*ir nfr ir nfr*,"[108] sur une inscription qu'il laissa sur une ruine proche.[109] Quant au scribe Ahmès, il consigne de façon traditionnelle sa visite auprès de Djéser:

> Le scribe Ahmès fils de Iiptah est venu pour voir le temple de Djéser. Il l'a trouvé comme le ciel en son intérieur, lorsque Ré s'y lève. Il dit: "que l'on apporte du pain, des boeufs, des volailles et toutes sortes de bonnes choses pures pour le ka de Djéser. Puisse le ciël pleuvoir de la myrrhe et couler de l'encens.[110]

2. *Le Sphinx*

A Giza, à la lisière du désert, le Sphinx, monument d'une antiquité immémoriale, ne pouvait manquer de frapper l'imagination des Memphites.[111] Initialement statue du roi Khéphren (IV^{e} Dynastie), l'identité du Sphinx sera réinterprétée au début du Nouvel Empire: on en fit Harmakhis ("Horus dans l'Horizon", ou "Horus dans Akhet", nom de la nécropole de Giza), on vit en lui une forme de Ré-Horakhty, les Sémites établis dans la région y reconnurent leur Houroun, dieu faucon comme Horus. La "fabrique des dieux" fonctionnait bien à coup sûr: à l'instar du colosse de Memnon dont nous reparlerons, nous assistons ici à une reconstruction à partir d'une figure religieuse antique, qui est dotée d'une nouvelle identité et d'un nouveau nom. Il est cependant difficile de déterminer si l'émergence dès le début de la XVIII^{e} Dynastie de ce regain d'intérêt est d'origine royale ou populaire. L'intérêt des princes pour le monument, comme le confirment des textes fameux, en est une constituante importante, si ce n'est fondamentale: ils ne pouvaient oublier que le site est un haut lieu de la royauté. Zone d'escapade, de promenade, de chasse dans le désert, Giza était en outre un lieu de délassement pour les princes memphites. Sommeillant à l'ombre du Sphinx, le futur Touthmès IV eut un songe célèbre, dans lequel la statue s'adressant à lui, lui demanda de rétablir son culte. Le texte précise que le monument fait déjà l'objet d'un pèlerinage de la part des populations locales: "Les districts de Memphis venaient à lui (le Sphinx), ainsi que toutes les villes qui étaient à proximité, leurs bras en adoration de son visage, et chargés de nombreuses offrandes pour son ka."[112] Le site est ainsi un lieu de convergence, objet d'une piété royale autant que populaire, comme le confirment les nombreux documents trouvés sur place.

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[107] Texte: KRI III, 148; traduction: Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 58. Voir aussi, K. Kitchen, *Ramsès II. Le pharaon triomphant* (trad. française; Paris 1985), 206–208.

[108] Sur cette formule voir M. Marciniak, "Quelques remarques sur la formule 'ir nfr, ir nfr'", *Études et Travaux* 2 (1968):26–31. La formule se rencontre aussi dans d'autres contextes, cf. P. Vernus, *Athribis*, BdE 74 (Cairo 1978), 174 (doc. 145), et du même auteur: *Affaires et scandales sous les Ramsès* (1993), 230 n. 100.

[109] Texte: G. Jéquier, *Deux pyramides du Moyen Empire*, Fouilles à Saqqarah, (Cairo 1933), p. 14–15; traduction Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 58 et Kitchen, *Ramsès II*, 207.

[110] Voir C. Firth et J.E. Quibell, *The step pyramid* 1 (Cairo 1935), 78; D. Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige im Bewusstsein ihrer Nachwelt*, MÄS 17 (Munich 1969), 66 pour le texte et 65–73.

[111] Pour ce qui suit, voir C. Zivie, *Giza au 2e millénaire*, BdE 70 (Cairo 1976), 320–328 et C. Zivie-Coche, "Aux marges de Memphis: Giza", dans: *Memphis et ses nécropoles au Nouvel Empire*, éd. du CNRS (Paris 1988), 113–122 (spécialement 119–121); Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 50–52.

3. *Deir el-Bahari*

L'activité religieuse privée régnant à Deir el-Bahari, sur la rive ouest de Thèbes, illustre à la fois le phénomène du culte local, des déplacements à l'occasion des fêtes, et la pratique des inscriptions commémorant une visite. Comme à Saqqara, c'est sur les marges, en bordure du désert, que les pèlerins locaux vont occasionnellement se déplacer. A Deir el-Bahari, les Thébains vont visiter et prier la déesse Hathor. Les visiteurs du lieux à l'époque ramesside, dont quelques hauts personnages de la Cour, ont laissé leurs inscriptions sur les parois de l'ancien temple de Touthmès III, devenu site d'un culte populaire envers Hathor.[113] Si le pèlerinage local concerne essentiellement les Thébains, des personnes de passage peuvent également s'arrêter au sanctuaire: ainsi un certain Hori, scribe employé au temple de Min, qui vient peut-être de Panopolis, au nord, et un prêtre du "temple d'Horus" (d'Edfou?).[114] Un groupe considérable de ces inscriptions furent écrites à l'occasion de la "Belle Fête de la Vallée", lors de laquelle on se déplaçait sur la rive ouest:

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[112] Texte: Urk. IV, 1539–1544; passage choisi ici: 1542 8–9; voir le texte, le commentaire et la traduction chez Zivie, *Giza au 2e millénaire*, 125–145.

[113] M. Marciniak, *Deir el-Bahari I. Les inscriptions hiératiques du Temple de Thoutmosis III*, Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences (Varsovie 1974), 20–36.

[114] Inscriptions n° 28 et 119, Marciniak, *Deir el-Bahari I.*

> L'an 22(?) deuxième mois de la saison Chemou, le 23 ème jour. Ce jour-là est venu le scribe Ashakheret, dans la maison de Khonsou à Karnak avec la danseuse d'Amon Taynedjem pour prier devant la maîtresse Hathor, maîtresse de Djeseret, pendant la Belle Fête de la Vallée d'Amon-Ré, le roi des dieux, fille de Ré. Donne-moi la santé (et) la force.[115]

Participant probablement à un cortège clérical, l'auteur de cette inscription, à l'instar de ceux des autres attestations étudiées par Marciniak, a sans doute profité de l'occasion de la fête d'Amon l'amenant sur la rive ouest pour aller prier Hathor. On remarquera aussi que le style de ces graffiti est moins conventionnel qu'à l'accoutumée, plus spontané. Ces inscriptions sont des demandes de protection, des formules de reconnaissance envers la divinité; parfois seul un nom fut gravé. Ce groupe homogène d'inscriptions diffère passablement de celles des sites qui ne sont que des monuments remarquables que l'on visite, même avec une pieuse intention, ou un comportement de dévot. Ce ne sont pas des inscriptions de visiteurs en promenade admirant les merveilles du passé; le site est un oratoire, à l'instar de celui de Sekhmet à Abousir, on y prie une divinité à laquelle on rend visite à l'occasion, probablement rapidement, comme le suggère Marciniak.

II. *Epoque gréco-romaine*

Il serait abusif de tracer une nette césure entre l'époque ptolémaïque et celles qui la précèdent, notamment en matière religieuse. Cependant, la question des pèlerinages dans l'Egypte gréco-romaine a pu être traitée pour elle-même, sans que l'on conçoive ces pèlerinages comme un prolongement direct des pratiques pharaoniques plus anciennes. Cela est principalement dû au fait que pour une part importante, la documentation considérée est en langue grecque. Les égyptologues et les épigraphistes s'accordent pour reconnaître en Egypte gréco-romaine l'existence indéniable de pèlerinages individuels.[116] Il reste à déterminer dans quelle mesure les visites et certains pèlerinages manifestes de l'époque gréco-romaine attestés par des inscriptions grecques procèdent ou non de coutumes égyptiennes plus anciennes. Il ne faut pas oublier que pour pèleriner il faut bénéficier d'une situation politique propice au voyage. Dans les périodes de confusion et de troubles qui suivirent le Nouvel Empire, puis lors des guerres, des invasions, le climat n'était certes pas favorable aux expéditions lointaines. La paupérisation de la population contribua encore à accroître les tendances autarciques des Egyptiens. Aux époques plus fastes, sous les Saïtes, sous la domination perse, les cultes populaires connurent une nouvelle recrudescence: que l'on songe au témoignage d'Hérodote. Aussi, on verra facilement dans l'époque ptolémaïque puis romaine une stabilité intérieure (certes entrecoupée de périodes plus au moins agitées), liée à une autorité centrale de plus en plus puissante, permettant aux voyageurs des trajets assez sereins à l'intérieur du pays. Avec l'arrivée des Grecs, s'ajoute également une nouvelle donnée: un intérêt pour le passé prestigieux de l'Egypte, une fascination chez les intellectuels pour les secrets d'une civilisation riche en mystères.[117] Cet intérêt se manifeste par la visite des sites du passé prestigieux, devenus curiosités touristiques. Nous ne sommes finalement pas très loin de l'intérêt des Egyptiens du Nouvel Empire pour leur propre passé, d'autant plus que cet intérêt des Grecs pour les dieux et les monuments égyptiens s'accompagne lui aussi de piété. Si l'on se tourne vers Alexandre, on découvre que c'est un souci de légitimation et de fierté personnelle qui le poussa à prendre la longue route de l'oasis de Siouah, pour rendre visite au dieu Amon et à son oracle.[118] Ce pèlerinage individuel est un exemple marquant de l'attirance exercée par les cultes égyptiens, ainsi que des motivations qui peuvent conduire à prendre la route pour rencontrer un dieu particulier.

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[115] M. Marciniak, "Encore sur la Belle Fête de la Vallée", *Études et Travaux 5* (1971):54–64, inscription n° 1, 54–56.

[116] Sur le sujet en général, lire E. Bernand, "Pèlerins dans l'Egypte grecque et

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romaine", *Mél. Lévêque* (1988), 49–63. N. Hohlwein, "Déplacements et tourisme dans l'Egypte romaine", *CdE* 15 (1940):253–278.

[117] Voir notamment F. Hartog, "Les Grecs égyptologues", *Annales ESC* 5 (1986):953–967. Sur l'historique des Aegyptiaca grecques précédant l'époque ptolémaïque, cf. C. Froidefond, *Le mirage égyptien dans la littérature grecque d'Homère à Aristote* (Paris 1971). Sur Hérodote et son approche "touristique" des cultures qu'il rencontre, cf. J. Redfield, "Herodotus the tourist", *Classical Philology* 80 (1985):97–118.

[118] Récit chez Plutarque, *Vie d'Alexandre*, 26.11–27.11 et Arrien, *Anabase*, 3.3–4. Sur le site et la visite d'Alexandre, cf. K. Kuhlmann, *Das Ammoneion. Archäologie, Geschichte und Kultpraxis des Orakels von Siwa*, AVDAIAK 75 (Cairo 1988), notamment 141–157. Egalement dans un souci d'égyptianisation de la part d'un souverain étranger, cf. P. Derchain, "La visite de Vespasien au Sérapeum d'Alexandrie", *CdE* 28 (1953):261–279.

La documentation de base pour les visites de sanctuaires à cette époque sont les proscynèmes, inscriptions grecques qui consignent un type particulier de dédicaces et de formules d'hommages religieux inscrites sur les monuments. Ce type de formule d'adoration se substitue épigraphiquement à la présence du fidèle sur les lieux.[119] Dans cette mesure, le proscynème procède du même désir attesté par les sources égyptiennes de demeurer auprès du dieu, de laisser son nom: "Je ferai que ton nom soit établi pour l'éternité et à jamais, je ne permettrai pas que ton nom périsse dans les temples."[120] On retiendra, comme une autre pétrification de ce souhait, les gravures de pieds (les "pieds de pèlerins", en fait souvent les prêtres du temple) sur les dallages et sur les toits des temples.[121] Il serait vain de chercher à déterminer si la pratique grecque du proscynème dérive de coutumes égyptiennes (tout en adoptant une forme nouvelle) ou bien s'il s'agit d'une invention spontanée; il y a plutôt lieu de constater l'expression simultanée d'un désir de même type au sein de la population: laisser son nom lors d'une visite, rendre hommage aux dieux du lieu. Enfin, si l'on parle de proscynèmes grecs, on se gardera de voir automatiquement l'acte d'adoration d'un "grec authentique" (à savoir un citoyen d'une cité grecque d'Egypte), définition à laquelle il est préférable de renoncer en ce qui concerne l'Egypte campagnarde et populaire de cette époque, une Egypte multi-culturelle, où les indigènes hellénisés sont nombreux, et où le seul critère onomastique ne fournit pas une preuve "d'ethnicité" suffisante. L'étude des proscynèmes et des inscriptions démotiques laissés sur les monuments montre généralement que, à l'instar de ce que l'on constatait pour l'Egypte des époques précédentes, ce sont surtout des gens de passage, des fonctionnaires en mission, des militaires, qui ont profité de leur présence sur ou près d'un lieu sacré pour rendre hommage aux dieux, et pour pérenniser sur pierre leur présence en ces lieux.[122] Dans les temples, c'est sur les toits que les prêtres en service ont parfois laissé une marque de leur piété. Une formule standard en démotique assure la permanence du fidèle auprès du dieu: "que le beau nom de X demeure ici devant (le dieu),"[123] formule parfois complétée d'imprécations: "celui qui effacera cela, on effacera son nom au ciel."[124] A Médinet Habou par exemple, l'étude des graffiti démotiques a montré que la majorité des inscriptions provenait de prêtres en service dans le temple même ou venant des alentours.[125] Si le souhait de rester auprès du dieu, concrétisé par une inscription sur pierre, émane très souvent des locaux, cependant, comme on le verra, certains sanctuaires drainent également parmi leurs fidèles des gens venus spécialement de loin. La piété envers le dieu du lieu, ce "pèlerinage occasionnel" déjà décrit, est parfaitement illustré par l'acte d'adoration d'un certain Sansnôs, écrit sur un mur du temple de Kalabchah (Talmis) en Nubie, à l'époque impériale:

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[119] Selon la définition de G. Geraci dans son étude majeure sur la question, "Ricerche sul Proskynema," *Aegyptus* 51 (1971):3–211.

[120] G. Posener, *Le papyrus Vandier*, Bibliothèque générale de l'IFAO 7 (Cairo 1985), 47–48, 1–15–2.1.

[121] Pour l'essentiel, Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 59 et notamment 73–74, note 133 pour la bibliographie.

[122] Voir par exemple la documentation publiée par D. Devauchelle et G. Wagner, *Les graffites du Gebel Teir. Textes démotiques et grecs*, RAPH 22 (Cairo 1984). L'étude de

> Sansnôs, fils de Pseno ..., écrit: vénère le divin, sacrifie à tous les dieux, visite chaque sanctuaire en faisant acte d'adoration, honore particulièrement les dieux ancestraux et vénère surtout Isis, Sarapis, les plus grands dieux, sauveurs, bons, bienveillants, bienfaiteurs.[126]

Selon E. Bernand "le texte met en évidence les trois éléments qui paraissent constitutifs du fait de pèleriner: (1) une intention pieuse qui motive (2) un déplacement (3) vers un lieu consacré."[127] Par ailleurs, des conseils de piété comparables sont aussi attestés dans la documentation démotique.[128]

Précisons que dans la foisonnante documentation de l'époque grécoromaine, il ne sera possible ici que de retenir quelques cas marquants et emblématiques. Des questions sensibles, comme la pratique de l'incubation et les procédures oraculaires, sont également liées aux

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ces inscriptions liées à des carrières, montrent qu'il s'agit plus que de simples marques commémorant le passage: ce sont des témoignages de piété envers les dieux locaux.

[123] Voir F.L. Griffith, *Catalogue of the demotic graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus* (Oxford 1937), 8-11.

[124] D. Devauchelle, "Les graffites démotiques du toit du temple d'Edfou", *BIFAO* 83 (1983):123-131.

[125] H.J. Thissen, *Die demotischen Graffiti von Medinet Habu*, Demotische Studien 10, (Sommerhausen 1989), 220-221. Le texte n° 236, p. 146-149, témoigne cependant peut-être de la visite d'un groupe de prêtres venus "en pèlerinage". L'auteur donne également une bibliographie sur les éditions des graffiti démotiques (3-5).

[126] E. Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Egypte gréco-romaine*, Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon 98 (Paris 1969), 573-76, n° 165.

[127] E. Bernand, "Pèlerins dans l'Égypte grecque et romaine," 49. Ainsi Apollonius de Tyane (Philostrate, *Apollonius de Tyane* 5.43) allait de localité en localité, passant sans cesse d'une rive à l'autre du Nil pour ne pas laisser sans visite un temple.

[128] J.D. Ray, "A pious soldier: stele Aswan 1057", *JEA* 73 (1987):169-180; lire le texte traduit p. 175.

déplacements vers les temples, les motivant: s'y attarder en détail dépasserait le cadre de cet article.

A. *Constater un miracle: la visite au colosse de Memnon*

A Thèbes, le célèbre colosse de Memnon, attira pendant plusieurs siècles des visiteurs, dont certains de marque, venus constater un miracle inexplicable, sinon par la puissance des dieux: le chant matinal d'une statue mutilée.[129] C'est donc un phénomène, et non pas un monument, qui cause la venue des visiteurs. Des deux statues d'Amenhotep III qui marquaient l'entrée de son temple funéraire disparu, seule celle de droite était douée de cette faculté singulière. Sur ses jambes, jusqu'à une hauteur d'environ 5 mètres, 107 inscriptions grecques et latines (aucune en démotique), nous informent sur le miracle. Bien que le phénomène soit également corroboré par de nombreuses sources antiques, l'incertitude règne cependant sur les évènements précis qui amenèrent tout d'abord la statue à chanter, la conduisant à être investie de la personnalité du fils de l'Aurore,[130] puis finalement à se taire. La plus ancienne source sur le miracle est Strabon (XVII, 1,46) qui visite le site en 24 BCE: aussi on suspecte le tremblement de terre de 26 BCE d'être la cause d'une brisure qui aurait provoqué à l'aube (à cause de changements thermiques?) les singuliers craquements. Le colosse se tait vers la fin du 2^e^ siècle de notre ère. On a remis en doute l'hypothèse que la fin du phénomène résulterait de travaux entrepris par Septime Sévère.[131] En effet, la seule source est *l'Histoire Auguste*, qui ne consigne pas explicitement des travaux:

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[129] A. et E. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques et latines du colosse de Memnon*, BdE 31 (Cairo 1960). Les visiteurs attribuent aux dieux le phénomène; d'autres esprits moins pieux (à l'instar de Pline, 36.58) à l'action mécanique des rayons solaires.

[130] Les Grecs nommaient la région Memnonia depuis longtemps déjà; ce terme générique désignait les palais ruinés de l'Orient, Memnon étant lié à l'Ethiopie et à l'Orient en général, voir A. Bataille, *Les Memnonia* (Cairo 1952), 1–22, et 153–168 sur le colosse. Il est probable que le nom même égyptien d'Amenhotep (Neb-maât-Ré prononcé peut-être approximativement Nimmuria ou Mimmuria) dont la statue est l'effigie, soit homophone aux oreilles grecques avec celui de Memnon, cf. A.H. Gardiner, "The Egyptian Memnon", *JEA* 47 (1961):91–99. Cf. G. Haeny, "L'origine des traditions Thébaines concernant Memnon," BIFAO 64 (1966):203–212. Sur ce phénomène des étymologies diverses et des explications différentes d'un même nom, lire, comme me l'indique P. Borgeaud: P. Kingsley, "Poimandres: the etymology of the name and the origins of Hermetica," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 56 (1993):1–24.

[131] G. Bowersock, "The Miracle of Memnon", *BASP* 21 (1984):21–32, souhaiterait

> Sévère ne cessa, par la suite, de rappeler le plaisir que lui avait procuré ce voyage, qui lui avait permis de connaître le culte du dieu Sérapis, de contempler les monuments antiques et de voir des lieux nouveaux. Il avait en effet minutieusement visité (diligenter inspexit) Memphis, la statue de Memnon, les Pyramides et le Labyrinthe.[132]

Nous n'avons en fait pas de documents nous permettant de connaître exactement la nature des événements qui firent taire le colosse: on songe généralement à des réfections malencontreuses (des blocs de calcaire placés pour soutenir la tête), mais il pourrait aussi s'agir finalement d'une cause fortuite, d'une dégradation naturelle.

A la lecture chronologique des inscriptions, on est sensible à la construction d'une tradition. De l'étonnement face à un phénomène naturel dont on est témoin, à une interrogation sur la nature de la statue, un fils de l'Aurore ou un roi d'Orient dont Cambyse brisa l'effigie (inscription n° 103, 104), le bloc de pierre devient un être que l'on pressent divin et dont on organise le culte. Autant dire que c'est essentiellement dans le cadre d'une tradition grecque, qui fournit le schéma de référence mythologique pour le personnage, que ce miracle, plus que simple curiosité touristique, va attirer d'illustres personnages, comme les empereurs romains. Seul parmi les merveilles de l'Egypte, le colosse de Memnon laisse entrevoir directement aux fidèles à l'état de veille et sans intermédiaire la présence d'un dieu, du moins aux esprits aptes à accepter un tel prodige et à ceux qui veulent bien attendre le moment propice.

B. *Les tombeaux royaux*

Une autre curiosité thébaine: les "Syringes", tombeaux royaux ruinés de la montagne occidentale (nommés ainsi car leurs longs boyaux rappelaient la forme d'une flûte, en grec *syrinx*).[133] Ici, à la différence du colosse de Memnon, point de miracles à constater. La visite des tombeaux figure néanmoins dans le parcours "touristique" de la rive ouest de Thèbes, plusieurs visiteurs étant auparavant allés voir le colosse; d'autres y cherchent (et y trouvent) la tombe du fils de l'Aurore. Si auprès du colosse on rêve à Homère, dans la pénombre

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voir là l'action restauratrice de la reine Zénobie. Voir le nouvel examen du dossier par A. Théodoridès, "Pèlerinage au colosse de Memnon", *CdE* 64 (1989):267–282.

[132] *Histoire Auguste*, trad. A. Chastagnol, Robert Laffont (Paris 1994), 330–331, Severus 17.4.

[133] Pour ce qui suit, voir Bataille, *Les Memnonia*, 168–177.

des tombes aux décorations inquiétantes, on se plaît à rechercher Platon. Sans doute que la célèbre caverne du philosophe, dont une tradition attestait la visite en Egypte, parût digne des vestiges ruinés des grands rois du deuxième millénaire. On restera sensible à ce phénomène déjà fréquemment constaté en Egypte: un monument du passé se voit élaborer une nouvelle mémoire.

C. *Les soins miraculeux*

Les sanctuaires guérisseurs drainent à l'époque gréco-romaine une foule de visiteurs "intéressés", des pèlerins venant dans un but thérapeuthique. De même, les visiteurs convergeant vers les oracles[134] sont plus poussés par l'intérêt personnel que par une piété individuelle et spontanée. A l'époque ptolémaïque, les sanctuaires oraculaires et thérapeutiques qui s'adjoignent aux temples connaissent une forte vogue, ce que l'on constate du reste également hors d'Egypte, et génèrent des déplacements de personnes plus nombreux qu'auparavant.[135] L'étude des inscriptions laisse cependant entrevoir, comme à l'accoutumée, une grande majorité de visiteurs venant de la région: ainsi à Deir el-Bahari, où le sanctuaire ptolémaïque d'Amenhotep fils de Hapou est un lieu oraculaire qui s'ouvre à la population des environs (comme on l'a vu, le site attire des pèlerins locaux depuis le Nouvel Empire).[136] Nous sommes par ailleurs assez mal renseignés sur les pratiques thérapeutiques exactes auxquelles on recourait dans les sanatoria, édicules annexes à certains temples. On y trouvait des statues guérisseuses que l'on aspergeait d'une eau qui était bue par la suite, après que le liquide, ayant coulé sur les textes magiques inscrits sur la pierre, se soit imprégné de leurs vertus apotropaïques. On prenait également, comme à Dendera, des bains curatifs.[137] Les pratiques les plus intrigantes sont liées à l'incubation: on espérait des songes divins offrant la guérison.[138] S'il est certain qu'il existait en Egypte une antique tradition d'oniromancie, antérieure à celle consignée par Artémidore dans sa clé des songes,[139] il faut peut-être également prendre en compte pour la relation oniromancie-thérapeutique une influence grecque (et même babylonienne) dans ce domaine où, dans le sillage du dieu Asklépios d'Epidaure, les pratiques d'incubation sont notoires. En fait, ces pratiques sont à la mode dans différentes régions à cette époque, et le jeu d'influence entre les diverses mantiques (avec les pratiques babyloniennes par exemple) est probable, sans que l'on puisse mettre clairement en lumière une règle d'échange précise. Quelques documents attestent des sommeils dans les temples à buts curatifs avant l'époque ptolémaïque,[140] mais cette pratique se développe essentiellement à partir de l'époque grécoromaine (cf. infra § II.D.3.). Au Fayoum, à l'époque ptolémaïque puis surtout à l'époque romaine, les oracles des formes locales de Sobek se multiplient (oracles de Soknopaios à Soknopaiou Nesos, de

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[134] Sur cette question dont l'examen nous aménerait trop loin, voir essentiellement, J. Černy, dans: R. Parker, *A Saïte oracle papyrus from Thebes*, Brown Egyptological Studies 4 (Providence 1962), 35–48. Résumé et bibliographie de la question par J. Leclant, "Eléments pour une étude de la divination dans l'Egypte pharaonique", dans: *La divination* 1, ed. A. Caquot et M. Leibovici (Paris 1968), 1–23. P. Vernus, "Un texte oraculaire de Ramsès VI", *BIFAO* 75 (1975):103–110. L. Kákosy, s.v. "Orakel," *LÄ* 4 (1982):600–606. Sur la procédure à l'époque chrétienne, dont la ressemblance avec les antécédents pharaoniques est patente, cf. H. Youtie, "Questions to a christian oracle", *ZPE* 18 (1975):253–257. Voir également les études de J. Quaegebeur, à partir de l'onomastique démotique, sur les dieux liés aux oracles (Thot, Tithoès, Pnepheros): "Considérations sur le nom propre égyptien Teëphthaphônukhos", *OLP* 4 (1973):85–100. "Teëphibis, dieu oraculaire?", *Enchoria* 5 (1975): 19–24. "Tithoès, dieu oraculaire?", *Enchoria* 7 (1977):103–108.

[135] Voir N. Lewis, *La mémoire des sables* (Paris 1988), 100–102. Sur les mentalités dans la chora égyptienne, et sur le recours aux oracles, voir F. Dunand, *Religion populaire en Égypte romaine. Les terres cuites isiaques du Musée du Caire*, EPRO 76 (1979), 122–124.

[136] E. Laskowska-Kusztal, *Le sanctuaire ptolémaïque de Deir el-Bahari*, Deir el-Bahari 3, (Varsovie 1984), spécialement 118–127. Egalement, A. Bataille, "Aménothès, fils de Hapou à Deir-el-Bahari", *BSFE* 3 (1950):6–14, et: *Les inscriptions grecques du temple de Hatshepsout à Deir el-Bahari* (Cairo 1951), notamment, sur les pèlerins locaux,

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p. xv–xxx. Le site attire encore des visiteurs à l'époque chrétienne, au quatrième siècle: ainsi les proscynèmes laissés par des *sideourgoi* d'Hermonthis (à une vingtaine de kilomètres) attestent de leur venue afin de sacrifier un âne; voir A. Łatjar, *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 21 (1991):53–70. On pourrait être enclin à voir là une pratique païenne tardive, mais la raison du déplacement de ces artisans-sidérurgistes, le choix du lieu, la nature du sacrifice, le dieu nommé ("Le Grand Dieu") sont autant d'éléments qui demeurent mystérieux.

[137] F. Daumas, "Le Sanatorium de Dendera", *BIFAO* 56 (1957):35–57. W. Wetendorf, s.v. "Sanatorium," *LÄ* 5 (1984):376–377.

[138] S. Sauneron, "Les songes et leur interprétation dans l'Egypte ancienne", dans: *Les songes et leur interprétation*, Sources Orientales 2 (Paris 1959), 17–61; spécialement sur l'incubation, 40–43. Études de base sur l'oniromancie, à partir des documents démotiques: A. Volten, *Demotische Traumdeutung (Pap.Carlsberg XIII und XIV verso)*, Analecta Aegyptiaca 3 (Copenhague 1942), et J. Ray, *The Archive of Ḥor* (London 1976), 130–136. Ajouter notamment l'étude de J. Assmann, portant sur un rêve envoyé par la déesse Hathor, dont les paroles nocturnes sont consignées par le rêveur, Thotemheb: "Eine Traumoffenbarung der Göttin Hathor", *RdE* 30 (1978):22–50, et P. Vernus, s.v. "Traum," *LÄ* 6 (1984):745–749.

[139] Voir les remarques de Sauneron, "Les songes et leur interprétation," 52–53.

[140] P. Vernus, "Traum," note 18. Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 62 (note 143).

Soknebkoneus à Bakhias, de Soknebtynis à Tebtynis).[141] Une prière intéressante, conservée sur un papyrus démotique, nous apprend qu'une femme fait appel à Sobek de Tebtynis afin que le dieu la soigne.[142] Ce type de requête aux dieux à but thérapeutique est d'ailleurs également attesté dans les sources assyriennes.[143] Pour notre sujet, on retiendra essentiellement que ces pratiques généraient des déplacements nombreux vers les temples et ses officines.

Parmi les structures accueillant les malades ou les dévots en quête de quelque remède, il faut noter l'existence de chapelles de magie guérisseuse attenantes aux temples. A Karnak, un petit édifice de ce type fut découvert.[144] Un notable thébain avait fait construire (sous la XXV^e ou au début de la XXVI^e Dynastie) un édicule sur le parvis du temple de Mout, dont les parois consignaient des extraits de formules apotropaïques contre les scorpions. Cet édifice, qui précède l'époque ptolémaïque, confirme que les malades se rendaient vers les temples en quête de soins ou de remèdes prophylactiques magiques.

D. *Quelques sanctuaires prestigieux*

Bien que chaque région soit dotée de l'attirail religieux devant répondre aux souhaits des fidèles, certains sanctuaires ont une réputation pan-égyptienne. C'est le cas notamment de Philae, aux portes de l'Egypte, aux sources mythiques de la crue; c'est le cas d'Abydos au passé immémorial, et des grands centres religieux memphites. Si l'on vient à passer dans la région, le détour s'impose; mais parfois, le voyageur peut venir de plus loin pour honorer un dieu prestigieux, et inscrire un acte d'adoration qui installera le fidèle en bonne grâce auprès de la divinité. Dans certains cas cependant, la visite d'un site est plus à mettre au compte de la curiosité du touriste que de la piété du pèlerin. Ainsi, on allait voir les crocodiles sacrés du Fayoum pour le singulier spectacle qu'ils offraient.[145] D'autres visites aux animaux sacrés sont attestées dans les sources égyptiennes. Par exemple, cette inscription figurant sur une statue d'un prêtre de Mendès: "O, vous qui voyagez d'amont ou d'aval pour voir les grands béliers, priez le dieu en faveur de cette statue."[146]

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[141] Voir *LÄ* 5 (1984):1013 et note 367 col. 1028.

[142] J.D. Ray, "Papyrus Carlsberg 67: a healing prayer from the Fayum," *JEA* 61 (1975):181–188.

[143] Comme le signale Ray, "Papyrus Carlsberg 67": voir W. Hallo, "Individual prayer in Sumerian: the continuity of a tradition", *JAOS* 88 (1968):71–89.

[144] Pour ce qui suit, cf. C. Traunecker, "Une chapelle de magie guérisseuse sur le parvis du temple de Mout à Karnak," *JARCE* 20 (1983):68–92.

[145] Strabon 17.38. D. Crawford, *Kerkeosiris. An egyptian village in the Ptolemaic period* (Cambridge 1971), 95.

1. *Philae*

Les actes d'adoration écrits sur les parois du temple d'Isis à Philae[147] proviennent essentiellement de "pèlerins occasionnels", des gens de passage; de rares inscriptions consignent la fonction de leur auteur, précision qui permet de percevoir les raisons de la présence de la personne sur le site. Tout comme à Eléphantine auprès du dieu Khnoum et de la déesse Satis,[148] les visiteurs qui se pressent à Philae pour approcher Isis, s'ils ne viennent pas de la région, sont des fonctionnaires en mission, ou des gens de leur escorte, des militaires. Dans une requête émanant des prêtres de l'abaton de Philae, une évocation des visiteurs occasionnels témoigne bien de l'ordinaire des "pèlerins":

> Attendu que les gens de passage à Philae, stratèges, épistates, thébarques, greffiers royaux, chefs des gendarmes, tous les autres fonctionnaires, les troupes qui les accompagnent et le reste de leur suite, nous contraignent à faire les frais de leur présence ...[149]

Mais dans certains cas, explicitement, des visiteurs sont venus de loin, et même parfois d'Alexandrie à l'autre extrémité de l'Egypte; c'est le cas de Serenus, un authentique pèlerin qui, à la suite d'un oracle, vient honorer Isis:

> Celui qui a adoré l'Isis de Philae a un sort heureux, non seulement parce qu'il devient riche, mais parce qu'en même temps il obtient une longue vie. Moi, qui ai été élevé près de l'Isis de Pharos, je suis venu ici-je suis Serenus, adjoint du très illustre Ptolémaios-, en compagnie de Félix et d'Apollônios le peintre; incités par les oracles d'Apollon, prince invisible, c'est pour des libations et des sacrifices, que nous sommes venus ici, désireux d'y participer. Car cela était bienséant. On ne trouvera là rien à blâmer.[150]

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[146] Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne," 20; M. Burchardt, "Ein saitischer Statuensockel in Stockholm," *ZÄS* 47 (1910):111–115 (p. 112, texte B l. 1). H. De Meulenare et P. MacKay, *Mendes II* (Warminster 1976), 198, n° 58.

[147] A. et E. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 1–2 (Paris 1969).

[148] H. Maehler, "Visitors to Elephantine: who were they?", in: *Life in a multicultural society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine*, éd. J. Johnson, SAOC 51 (Chicago 1992), 209–213.

[149] A. et E. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 1:165, n° 19 l.26.

[150] A. et E. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2:166 sq., n° 168.

Quand on vient de loin, on aime à le souligner, comme si la piété du fidèle se mesurait à la distance parcourue: "Catilius a consacré sur la pierre divine une sainte épigramme, venu ici de la ville d'Alexandre."[151] On compte ainsi parmi les visiteurs un certain Héliodore fils de Zénon (IG Philae n° 170), venu de Césarée Panias aux sources du Jourdain, pèlerin qui a d'ailleurs également laissé sur le colosse de Memnon une marque de son passage (inscription n° 69). Nous ne saurons jamais sans doute si dans son cas c'est un intérêt culturel ou artistique pour les merveilles de l'Egypte, ou si c'est sa piété personnelle, qui le conduisit à entreprendre ce long voyage. A Philae d'ailleurs, Isis et son temple ne sont pas les seules curiosités. La région en elle-même, une porte de l'Egypte, où la crue se gonfle, où le tumulte des cataractes du Nil témoigne de l'activité d'un dieu enfoui mystérieusement sous les blocs granitiques (comme on aime à le représenter), est chargée de sacralité: "Nous sommes venus à la limite de l'Egypte, à l'île splendide, pour voir la terre d'Isis, fille d'Inachos, et le cours profond du Nil qui, chaque année, conserve l'Egypte féconde pour le bonheur de César."[152]

Si la plupart des inscriptions de Philae sont des actes d'adoration envers les dieux, environ le quart des dédicaces consiste en actes d'allégeance envers les souverains, qui ont laissé des inscriptions commémorant leur visite (Ptolémée III, Ptolémée VIII).[153]

Au 5e siècle encore, voisinent à Philae les cultes païens et les chrétiens. Le site change de propriétaire, mais ne perd pas de son attrait.

2. *Abydos*

A Abydos, dans les ruines du fastueux temple funéraire de Séthi I^{er}, où Strabon reconnaît un Memnonion (XVII,1, 42), de nombreux proscynèmes grecs,[154] très souvent émanant de soldats en retour de mission, remercient Sérapis de bien vouloir leur accorder la santé. Cependant, dans l'ancienne cité d'Osiris, ce n'est pas seulement pour la gloire de Sérapis-Osiris ou pour la beauté de sa parèdre Isis que l'on accourt, mais pour le rictus d'un "démon". En effet, dans les ruines du temple d'Osiris, une chapelle oraculaire du dieu Bès attire les foules, principalement à l'époque romaine. La présence de Bès en ces lieux n'est pas si incongrue que certains ont pu le penser. Promu divinité majeure dès la Basse Epoque, dieu populaire par excellence, Bès, comme le montre D. Meeks, rejoint Osiris par divers aspects de sa personnalité: comme ce dernier, il est acéphale et masqué.[155] En outre, c'est depuis longtemps en Egypte un dieu lié au sommeil, dont il est un protecteur. Les inscriptions grecques précisent clairement que l'on venait dormir dans le temple, parfois à plusieurs reprises, pour y obtenir des songes inspirés par le dieu: "Ici, j'ai plusieurs fois dormi et j'ai vu des songes véridiques, moi, Harpokras, habitant de la sainte ville de Pan, prêtre, fils chéri de Kopreias. A Bès, de qui émanent tous les oracles, reconnaissance infinie."[156] L'oracle de Bès prend place dans l'histoire mouvementée de la fin du paganisme. Comme le rapporte Ammien Marcellin (XIX,12), un scandale majeur éclata à Abydos, lié à l'oracle du dieu. En 359 CE, l'Empereur Constance II est informé que l'on avait questionné le dieu sur la durée de son règne: en plein climat de proscription des oracles, cette information subtilisée aux archives du temple d'Abydos, où l'on gardait les questions adressées au dieu Bès, déclencha une féroce campagne de répression.[157]

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[151] A. et E. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2:77–78, n° 142.

[152] A. et E. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2:128 sq., n° 158.

[153] A. et E. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae*, 55 sq.

[154] Pour ce qui suit, notamment pour les données sur l'oracle de Bès, voir P. Perdrizet et G. Lefebvre, *Les graffites grecs du Memnonion d'Abydos, Inscriptiones Graecae Aegypti III*, (Nancy 1919; repr. Chicago 1978), vii sq. Ajouter B. Boyaval, "Graffite grec de l'Osireion d'Abydos," *CdE* 44 (1969):353–359.

3. *Giza et Saqqara*

Sur le plateau de Giza, le Sphinx, comme le témoignent de nombreux ex-votos, ainsi que les travaux officiels de restauration, attire toujours les pèlerins locaux.[158] A l'époque impériale, le monument est soigneusement entretenu; les actes d'adoration, à la différence de ceux que l'on rencontre par exemple sur le colosse de Memnon, ne sont pas le fait de fonctionnaires en visite, mais émanent de fractions de la population provenant de milieux plus modestes.[159] La statue passe pour oeuvre divine, et on vient l'admirer comme telle: "Ton corps étonnant a été façonné par les dieux éternels (...) et ils t'ont disposé au milieu d'un socle naturel, après avoir écarté le sable."[160] Monument du passé objet d'une nouvelle ferveur, il est possible que l'apparence du Sphinx ait en outre rappelé à des habitants du Fayoum leur dieu local Mestasytmis, dieu dont le visage se présente de face, coiffé du némès, montrant des oreilles bien visibles, prêtes à écouter les prières.[161] Comme le dit Pline, "on vénère la face peinte en rouge du monstre" (*Hist.Nat.* XXXVI.12).

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[155] D. Meeks, "Dieu masqué, dieu sans tête," *Archéo Nil* 1 (1991):5–15 (p. 11 sur Bès à Abydos). Sur l'oracle de Bès et sur son identification à un démon au début du Christianisme, voir Sauneron, "Les songes et leur interprétation," 50–52. Voir également: L. Kákosy, "Probleme der Religion im römerzeitlichen Ägypten," *ANRW* II.18.5 (1995), 2980–2982. F. Dunand, "L'oracle de Bès à Abydos," Oracles et prophéties dans l'Antiquité, Travaux du Centre de Recherche sur le Proche-Orient, 15 Paris, 1997, 65–84.

[156] Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques*, 525, n° 131 (= IG Abydos n° 528).

[157] Cf. P. Chuvin, *Chronique des derniers païens* (Paris 1990), 46, 252 sq. Sur l'histoire du site à la fin du paganisme, voir aussi A. Piankoff, "The Osireion of Seti I at Abydos during the greco-roman period and the Christian occupation," *BSAC* 15 (1958/60):125–149.

[158] C.M. Zivie, "Bousiris du Létopolis," *Livre du Centenaire*, MIFAO 104 (Cairo 1980), 91–107.

A Saqqara, la nécropole memphite est l'objet de visites de pèlerins locaux. C'est le cas du secteur du Sérapéum, où les différents lieux de cultes composaient une mosaïque cultuelle trépidante.[162] On y rencontrait bien sûr Sérapis, Anubis qui y avait un temple, Bastet mais aussi Astarté, on y célébrait le culte des philosophes et des poètes grecs,[163] et plus tard, dans la plaine des environs, de Mithra.[164] Les cultes des animaux sacrés foisonnaient: outre le taureau Apis, on momifiait "à la chaîne" ibis, chats, babouins sacrés.[165] Une chapelle de Bès, près de la pyramide de Téti, à quelque distance du Sérapeum, ainsi que des nombreux objets votifs à caractère obscène (notamment les phallophores) démontrent l'existence d'un culte populaire voué à ce dieu.[166] L'ensemble cultuel comporte des chambres, on l'on peut supposer que les suppliants dormaient pour recevoir des songes prophétiques du dieu. Les fidèles venaient aussi pour consulter des onirocrites, au Sérapeum même, mais également dans les alentours: une officine d'un devin crétois nous a laissé sa célèbre enseigne près du pastophorion (devant le Sérapeum).[167] De nombreux graffiti et autres documents attestent d'une importante fréquentation: des visites royales, des fonctionnaires (essentiellement memphites), et la masse des fidèles, venant très majoritairement des nomes voisins.[168] Tout comme auprès du Sérapis de Canope, dont le temple est célèbre pour ses cures miraculeuses (Strabon XVII.17), le sanatorium du Sérapeum de Memphis attire les malades des environs. Dans l'enceinte du Serapieion, des reclus volontaires (*katochoi*) sont au service du dieu.[169] Leur milieu est mixte, gréco-égyptien. Une collection d'ostraca démotiques, a permis de recueillir les archives de Hor, un prêtre égyptien originaire de la ville de Sebennytos qui vers 150 BCE pratiquait l'incubation.[170] Les archives de Ptolemaios,[171] un *katochos*, sont célèbres et nous dépeignent les querelles, les problèmes de la vie quotidienne, mais aussi le climat onirique qui règne en ces lieux, où l'on attend les signes nocturnes de Sérapis. Ces *katochoi* devaient également, vraisemblablement, faire fonction d'interprètes des rêves pour les consultants.[172] On n'a pas de mal à imaginer l'atmosphère bigarrée des lieux, et certainement, ceux qui venaient y chercher un point d'ancrage à leur dévotion, devaient être confrontés à une armée de charlatans.

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[159] E. Bernand, "Pèlerinage au grand Sphinx de Gizeh", *ZPE* 51 (1983):185–189. C.M. Zivie, s.v. "Gisa," *LÄ* 2 (1976):608.

[160] E. Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques*, 510, n° 129.

[161] Voir G. Wagner et J. Quaegebeur, "Une dédicace grecque au dieu égyptien Mestasytmis de la part de son synode," *BIFAO* 73 (1973):4 1–60. L'inscription en cause est un socle où en démotique est invoqué Harmachis et Mestasytmis (CG 50041), ibid., 46 et 57.

[162] D.J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton 1988), 212–65.

[163] Voir J.-Ph. Lauer et Ch. Picard, *Les statues ptolémaïques du Sarapieion de Memphis* (Paris 1955). Les éléments de cet ensemble monumental unique qui sont restés *in situ*, sont aujourd'hui passablement dégradés.

[164] On peut voir au Musée du Caire les reliefs provenant du Mithraeum memphite (rez-de-chaussée, salle 34 n° 990). Voir F. Cumont, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra* 2 (Bruxelles 1896), 520–522, n° 285.

[165] Voir le résumé de H.S. Smith, qui dresse par ailleurs un excellent portrait de la physionomie des lieux, "Les catacombes des animaux sacrés", *Les dossiers d'Archéologie* 146–147 (1990):114–19.

[166] P. Derchain, "Observations sur les Erotica", dans G.T. Martin (éd.), *The sacred animal necropolis at north Saqqâra* (London 1981), 166–170. Pour la découverte des chambres de Bès, cf. J.E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara* (Cairo 1907), 12–14, 28–29.

E. *Conclusions et perspectives chronologiques*

Après cet examen d'une documentation enjambant les millénaires, on aura noté quelques constantes qu'il serait tentant d'expliquer par le conservatisme de la société et de l'esprit égyptiens. On pourra ainsi situer ces données en arrière plan du dossier concernant l'Egypte copte. Si l'on s'accorde à reconnaître en Egypte l'existence de pèlerinages occasionnels, et spécialement de déplacements à buts thérapeutiques, le voyage n'est pas à intégrer en lui-même dans le cadre d'une expérience religieuse. Si des sites d'attraction génèrent des mouvements de population, les mouvements de masse s'observent cependant dans des limites régionales. Mis à part peut-être le cas abydénien où c'est la nature même d'Osiris, dieu des morts, qui permet d'envisager la visite dans le cadre d'une espérance pour l'au-delà, la motivation qui préside aux déplacements vers les temples concerne des soucis courants, et non pas une quête de salut: la santé, la bonne marche des affaires, le quotidien.[173] Dans cette mesure, le développement des oracles, le recours aux dieux sauveurs, sont significatifs. Comme le remarquait J. Černý,[174] la teneur des pétitions écrites en grec adressées aux oracles correspond aux demandes égyptiennes; de même, les papyrus coptes du VII^{e} ou du VIII^{e} siècle confirment que la pratique de l'oracle ne disparaît pas avec le paganisme. On s'adressait à Sérapis, à Sobek: on s'adresse à présent au dieu chrétien. L'Islam seul mettra fin à des millénaires de pratique. De même, on ne verra pas forcément de césure entre l'époque païenne et chrétienne en ce qui concerne les habitudes de déplacements vers les sanctuaires. C'est cependant au niveau de l'espérance, du contenu religieux de l'expérience, que la différence sera notable. On ne trouve pas en Egypte pharaonique des exigences de comportement, comme l'ascèse, incitant à définir le pèlerin comme un type de dévot à part entière: le pèlerinage demeure en Egypte, comme l'avait clairement défini J. Yoyotte, une pratique occasionnelle, un moment, un détour. La piété que l'Egyptien éprouve pour le dieu de son terroir, il est également capable de la ressentir pour le dieu devant lequel sa route l'amène.

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[167] Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques*, 435–40, nº 112.

[168] U. Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit* 1 (Berlin/Leipzig 1927), 50–52.

[169] Sur la katochè, ou réclusion volontaire, voir L. Delekat, *Katoche, Hierodulie und Adoptionsfreilassung*, Münchner Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und Antiken Rechtsgeschichte 47 (Munich 1964). Egalement: Wilcken, *UPZ* 1:52–77.

[170] Ray, *The Archive of Ḥor.*

[171] Voir N. Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt*, (Oxford 1986), chapitre 5 "the recluse Ptolemaios", p. 68–87, qui nous dépeint de manière vivante l'atmosphère des lieux. Egalement, F. Dunand, dans: F. Dunand et C. Zivie-Coche, *Dieux et hommes en Egypte* (Paris 1991), 299–303. Pour mémoire, cf. A. Bouché-Leclerq, "Les reclus du Sérapeum de Memphis," *Mélanges Perrot* (Paris 1903), 17–24.

[172] Wilcken, *UPZ* 1:69.

Pour Shenoute "C'est une chose excellente que d'aller prier sur le tombeau d'un saint ou d'un martyr, pour y chanter des hymnes et des psaumes et se purifier pour ensuite communier."[175] On n'aura pas de mal à voir comme des préfigurations de cette attitude, celle des dévots du Nouvel Empire et des époques postérieures, que leur piété conduisait aux nécropoles des rois illustres du passé. A Hermopolis en Haute Egypte, on retiendra le cas du tombeau de Pétosiris, célèbre personnage de la fin de l'époque perse, dont la tombe se vit transformée en lieu de pèlerinage.[176] Le souvenir d'un personnage d'exception, que l'on n'hésiterait pas à qualifier de saint, constitue dans ce cas la cause de cet attrait pour un tombeau: "J'adresse la parole à Pétosiris dont le cadavre est sous terre, mais qui réside en réalité parmi les dieux. Sage, il est avec les sages ..."[177] De même les sommeils dans les sanctuaires, la pratique gréco-romaine de l'incubation à but curatif, et ses racines plus anciennes, préfigurent certaines pratiques chrétiennes. On avait ainsi acquis l'habitude de prendre le chemin des sanctuaires pour y obtenir une guérison d'origine divine. Avec le christianisme, la pratique reste ancrée, mais la divinité vers laquelle on se dirige alors devient le dieu chrétien. De même, l'existence des *katochoi*, vivant en communauté, en marge de la société, évoque les tendances au monachisme de la société chrétienne postérieure.[178] Les mentalités, les coutumes populaires, particulièrement en Egypte, sont tributaires d'un héritage plus que millénaire.

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[173] Lire sur la question: D. Meeks, "Le Salut en Egypte", *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Supplément 11/61 (1987):487- 498.

[174] *A Saite oracle papyrus*, 47–48.

[175] Cité par G. Viaud, *Les pèlerinages coptes en Egypte*, 2. Voir aussi J. Quaegebeur, "Les 'saints' égyptiens préchrétiens," 131 note 10, qui cite H. Delehaye, P. Peeters, R. Lechat, "Les Martyrs d'Egypte," *AnBoll* 40 (1922):38.

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[176] D. Devauchelle, "Le chemin de vie en Egypte ancienne", in *Sagesses de l'Orient ancien et chrétien*, ed. R. Lebrun (Bruxelles 1993), 115–119; du même auteur: "Le sentiment anti-perse chez les anciens Egyptiens," *Transeuphratène* 9 (1995), spécialement 78–79.

[177] Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques*, 495–98, n° 125. Voir aussi G. Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Pétosiris* (Cairo 1924), 21–25.

[178] Ce que rappelle J. Quaegebeur, "Les 'saints' égyptiens préchrétiens," 129–131.

JEWISH PILGRIMAGE AND JEWISH IDENTITY IN HELLENISTIC AND EARLY ROMAN EGYPT

ALLEN KERKESLAGER

I. *Introduction*[1]

A. *The Focus of this Study*

Martin Hengel's now classic study on the relations between ancient Judaism and its cultural milieu marked an irreversible turning point in research on Greco-Roman Judaism.[2] Hengel demonstrated on a comprehensive scale that Greco-Roman Judaism was permeated and shaped at its very core by the Hellenistic traditions of the world in which it developed. Louis Feldman, Aryeh Kasher, and others have continued to speak of Hellenistic culture as the antithesis of Judaism.[3] For them Hellenization is still tantamount to a compromise on orthodoxy or even outright "apostasy."[4] But most specialists in the study of ancient Judaism have accepted Hengel's basic thesis. This is exemplified in studies that have devoted special attention to Jews in Greco-Roman Egypt. John J. Collins, Joseph Mélèze-Modrzejewski, Gregory Sterling, and others have emphasized that "Jewish" identity in Greco-Roman Egypt was inseparable from "Hellenistic" identity.[5] Much remains to be done, however, in clarifying the many nuances of Jewish identity in the Greco-Roman period.

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[1] Despite the numerous faults that remain in this study, it would be much worse without the helpful criticisms and comments graciously offered by Robert Kraft, Ross Kraemer, and David Frankfurter. Much thanks to them all. David Frankfurter's patience and encouragement was especially appreciated. Others who responded to specific questions are acknowledged in the appropriate places below.

[2] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period* (trans. John Bowden; 2 vols; Philadelphia 1974).

[3] Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 7; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1985).

[4] Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 15, 18, 25, 51–63, 65–69, 76–77, 79–83, 196, *et passim*; Kasher, *Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* ix, 77–80, 86–88, 312–13, 335–37.

[5] E.g., Allen Kerkeslager, "Maintaining Jewish Identity in the Greek Gymnasium:

The present work is a modest attempt to advance the understanding of Jewish identity in Greco-Roman Egypt. The specific concern of this study is the ways in which Jewish identity was expressed in pilgrimage traditions that developed among the Jewish communities of Egypt in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. The primary emphasis in this study is the period from the beginning of intensified Jewish immigration into Egypt in 332 BCE to the serious attenuation of Jewish communal life in Egypt that accompanied the suppression of the Jewish revolt under Trajan in 117 CE.[6]

The one point that emerges from this analysis is that the semantic field of Jewish identity was broad enough to include some rather diverse elements that were often in tension with one another. Jewish identity in Greco-Roman Egypt shared both continuities and discontinuities with preexilic Israelite traditions, contemporary Jewish traditions in Palestine, contemporary Greek and Egyptian traditions, and later Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.

No attempt has been made to determine the "center" or "poles" around which Jewish identity tended to organize itself. But concentrations of emphasis in Jewish identity clearly do emerge. One concentration that seems to have been especially consistent in Alexandria and Lower Egypt, for example, was a preference for features traditionally ascribed to Hellenistic identity over those ascribed to Egyptian identity. This and other concentrations of emphasis may certainly provide insight into identifying the unifying center or poles in the

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A 'Jewish Load' in *CPJ* 3.519 (= P. Schub. 37 = P. Berol. 13406)," *JSJ* 28 (1997): 12–33; Gregory E. Sterling, "'Thus Are Israel': Jewish Self-Definition in Alexandria," *SPhA* 7 (1995):1–18; Joseph Mélèze-Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt: From Ramses II to Hadrian* (trans. Robert Cornmann; Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society, 1995), 47–225; Joseph Mélèze-Modrzejewski, "How to be a Jew in Hellenistic Egypt?" *Diasporas in Antiquity* (ed. Shaye J.D. Cohen and Ernest S. Frerichs; Brown Judaic Studies 288; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 65–92; Shaye J.D. Cohen, "'Those Who Say They Are Jews and Are Not': How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?" *Diasporas in Antiquity*, 1–45; Koen Goudriaan, "Ethnical Strategies in Graeco-Roman Egypt," *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (ed. Per Bilde, Troels Engberg-Pederson, Lise Hannestad, and Jan Zahle; Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 3; Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1992), 74–99; Alan Mendelson, *Philo's Jewish Identity* (BJS 161; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), esp. 1–22, 102–117, 244–46.

[6] I use the phrase "serious attenuation" rather than the stronger term "decimation" because it leaves more room for the ambiguities in our knowledge of the degree of devastation experienced by the Jewish communities in Egypt during the revolt under Trajan.

semantic field of Jewish identity. But no one single center emerges as the definitive criterion for evaluating the presence or absence of Jewish identity. Even devotion to the Law was not universally applied as the touchstone of Jewish identity in Egypt in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. For many Jews other elements of Jewish identity were far more important in the ways in which they understood their own Jewish identity. Consciousness of some type of unique connection to the land of Palestine, for example, may have been far more important to the self-understanding of many Jews than devotion to the Jewish Law.

B. *Method and Methodology*

The approach that is taken in this study assumes that Jewish identity, like other attributions of ethnic, cultural, or religious identity, is a social construct consisting of a cluster of variables to which certain groups attribute a unique importance in certain contexts.[7] To say that someone is a "Jew" or is acting in a "Jewish" manner requires the use of terminology inescapably rooted in some form of language. Language, however, operates only by convention.[8] It is a cultural system created and transmitted in a pragmatic context that is always changing and always placing new demands on the system for adaptation and adjustment. Each adjustment in the system may modify, enlarge, restrict, or in other ways affect the semantic field attached to one or more components in the system. The only way to delimit the semantic field of any linguistic element is thus through the observation of this element in a variety of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships, all of which are ideally studied both diachronically and synchronically.[9]

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[7] Koen Goudriaan, *Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology 5; Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1988), 8–13; cf. Uffe Østergård, "What is National and Ethnic Identity?" *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (ed. Per Bilde, Troels Engberg-Pederson, Lise Hannestad, and Jan Zahle; Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 3; Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1992), 16–38.

[8] For what follows, see Elizabeth Mertz, "Beyond Symbolic Anthropology: Introducing Semiotic Mediation," *Semiotic Mediation: Sociocultural and Psychological Perspectives* (ed. Elizabeth Mertz and Richard J. Parmentier; Language, Thought, and Culture: Advances in the Study of Cognition; New York: Academic Press, 1985), 1–19, and the classic introductions of Leonard Bloomfield, *Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1933] 1984); Edward Sapir, *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, [1921] 1949); Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger; trans. Wade Baskin; New York: McGraw-Hill, [1915] 1959).

The method by which one can arrive at a definition of "Jewish identity" in Greco-Roman Egypt is thus to observe the various expressions of this identity in as many different kinds of relationships as possible.[10] Ideally, the development of these relationships should be traced diachronically and compared synchronically in as many different settings as possible.

This is precisely the approach taken in this study. This study tries to draw conclusions about Jewish identity from the analysis of a number of different kinds of pilgrimage, tracing them diachronically and comparing them synchronically. These pilgrimage traditions are discussed both in relationship to each other and in relationship to other religious and cultural traditions. In keeping with the standard approach of both linguistic and philosophical phenomenology, features of identity that repeatedly display themselves in a variety of situations are credited with a unique importance in the conclusion of this analysis of Jewish identity.

This study is beset by a number of methodological difficulties.

(1) First, an inescapable circularity characterizes all research into Jewish identity. Any criterion by which one seeks to narrow the scope of sources to those relevant to "Jews" already presupposes a definition of Jewish identity. Even criteria that might seem to offer a sure guide for including some sources and excluding others, such as the presence of the self-designation "Jew" or some other ethnic term, can be very misleading.[11] The most consistent problem is that persons who do not share recognizable features

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[9] Cf. Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (2nd ed. rev.; New York: Mouton, 1956), 13–49.

[10] For the basic assumptions of transferring linguistic models to the study of culture, see Ward Goodenough, "Cultural Anthropology and Linguistics," *Language in Culture and Society: A Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology* (ed. Dell Hymes; New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 36–39; cf. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 87–125.

[11] Cf. Ross S. Kraemer, "Jewish Tuna and Christian Fish: Identifying Religious Affiliation in Epigraphic Sources," *HTR* 84 (1991):141–62; Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," *HTR* 82 (1989):35–54; Goudriaan, *Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt*, 1–21. The issues are unfortunately greatly oversimplified in the reductionistic criticisms of Kraemer by Margaret H. Williams, "The Meaning and Function of *Ioudaios* in Graeco-Roman Inscriptions," *ZPE* 116 (1997):249–62. On the debate over this issue, see the notes in the concluding section of this study.

of Jewish identity are automatically excluded from study and rendered invisible simply by the process of selecting the sources. This difficulty is most palpable in the following discussion at points in which Jews are not readily distinguishable from their Gentile neighbors.

(2) Second, evidence for Jewish pilgrimage in Egypt in the period under consideration is so sparse that a cautious use of ethnographic analogies from materials from outside of Egypt and the delimited period is necessary.[12] Historical reconstruction is always in some sense based on analogy.[13] But the use of analogies from sources geographically and temporally distant from the target of research may create the illusion that an analogy is relevant when it may not be at all.[14] Thus in some cases my use of analogies from sources outside of Egypt may have obscured the uniqueness of Jewish pilgrimage traditions in Egypt. It also may have obscured the degree to which the paucity of evidence for Jewish pilgrimage in Egypt is itself a significant finding. It must be emphasized that the scarcity of definitive evidence for Jewish pilgrimage in Egypt in the Second Temple Period presents a marked contrast with the abundance of evidence for later Christian pilgrimage traditions.

(3) Third, limitations of time and space prevent a full consideration of the regional and local nuances that may have distinguished one Jewish community in Egypt from another. The occasions in which I have specified the site that a piece of evidence directly

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[12] Only in rare cases have I used early rabbinic (mostly Tannaitic) sources. As is well known, the attributions and historical claims made in these sources are often unreliable. Hence I understand these sources primarily as witnesses to the time of their redaction. In some cases I have used them simply to offer suggestions for tracing the later stages of a trajectory that begins in my period of interest. In other cases I have used these sources in a conscious application of the methodology of ethnographic analogy developed in anthropological archaeology. For the fundamental logic of this method, see Lewis R. Binford, "Smudge Pits and Hide Smoking: The Use of Analogy in Archaeological Reasoning," *American Antiquity* 32 (1967):1–12 and the elaboration in Tim Murray and Michael J. Walker, "Like WHAT? A Practical Question of Analogical Inference and Archaeological Meaningfulness," *JAA* 7 (1988):248–87.

[13] Cf. Lewis R. Binford, *Debating Archaeology* (New York: Academic Press, 1989), 12–23; R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946), 231–82.

[14] Richard A. Gould and Patty Jo Watson, "A Dialogue on the Meaning and Use of Analogy in Ethnoarchaeological Reasoning," *JAA* 1 (1982):355–81; Alison Wylie, "An Analogy by Any Other Name Is Just as Analogical: A Commentary on the Gould-Watson Dialogue," *JAA* 1 (1982):382–401.

> concerns should make it clear that Alexandria is greatly overrepresented in the sources available for this study.[15]

Qualifications that appear throughout this study have been designed to address these obstacles. It must especially be emphasized that statements in this study that refer to "some" or "many" Jews must not be understood to apply to "most" or "all" Jews. Diversity and ambiguity found expression in every aspect of Jewish pilgrimage and Jewish identity in Hellenistic and early Roman Egypt.

II. *Pilgrimage to Jewish Temples and Synagogues*

A. *Pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem*

Pilgrimage to Jerusalem has been discussed in numerous other studies.[16] These studies are sufficient to preclude the need for a full treatment of pilgrimage to Jerusalem here. Only a few brief observations on the role of this pilgrimage in social and psychological constructions of Jewish identity are necessary.

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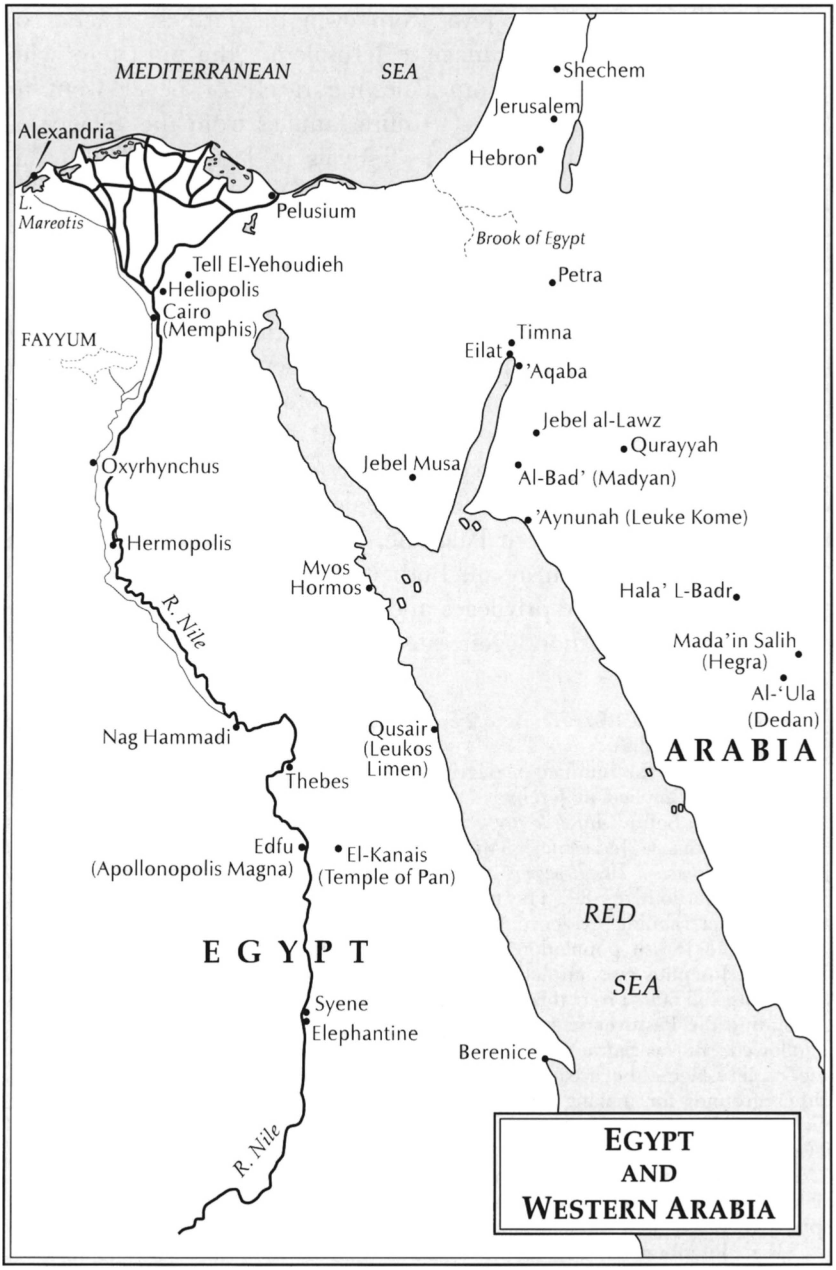
[15] This is partly true even of inscriptions. Papyri provide the broadest representation. See William Horbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt: With an Index of the Jewish Inscriptions of Egypt and Cyrenaica* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Victor A. Tcherikover, Alexander Fuks, Menahem Stern, and David M. Lewis, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (3 vols; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957–1964).

[16] E.g., Simon Coleman and John Elsner, *Pilgrimage Past and Present in the World Religions* (Cambridge 1995), 34–51; Yoram Tsafir, "Jewish Pilgrimage in the Roman and Byzantine Periods," *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn, 22.–28. September 1991*, ed. Ernst Dassmann and Josef Engemann, JAC Ergänzungsband 20, 1–2 (Münster 1995), 1.369–76; Carol Iancu, "Les Pèlerinages dans le Judaïsme après 70 et dans Israël Aujourd'hui," *Histoire des Pèlerinages non Chrétiens: Entre Magique et Sacré: le Chemin des Dieux*, ed. Jean Chelini et Henry Branthomme; (Paris 1987), 345–64; Shmuel Safrai, *Ha-Aliyah le-Regel bi-Yemei ha-Bayit ha-Sheni* (*Pilgrimage at the Time of the Second Temple Period*) (Jerusalem 1985), which is especially important; F.E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton 1985), 3.175; M. Join-Lambert, "Les Pèlerinages en Israël," *Les Pèlerinages de l'Antiquité Biblique et Classique à l'Occident Médiéval*, ed. F. Raphaël, G. Siebert, M. Join-Lambert, T. Fahd, M. Simon, and F. Rapp, Etudes d'Histoire des Religions 1 (Paris 1973), 57–62; Shmuel Safrai, "The Temple," *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, ed. S. Safrai, M. Stern, D. Flusser, and W.C. van Unnik, CRINT 1/2 (Assen and Philadelphia 1976), 865–907, esp. 891–904; Shmuel Safrai, Cecil Roth, Yvonne Glikson, and Semah Cecil Hyman, "Pilgrimage," *EncJud* 13 (1972):510–19.


MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Shechem
Jerusalem
Hebron
Alexandria
L. Mareotis
Pelusium
Brook of Egypt
Tell El-Yehoudieh
Heliopolis
Cairo (Memphis)
Petra
FAYYUM
Timna
Eilat
'Aqaba
Jebel al-Lawz
Qurayyah
Oxyrhynchus
Jebel Musa
Al-Bad' (Madyan)
'Aynunah (Leuke Kome)
Hermopolis
Myos Hormos
Hala' L-Badr
R. Nile
Mada'in Salih (Hegra)
Al-'Ula (Dedan)
Nag Hammadi
Qusair (Leukos Limen)
ARABIA
Thebes
Edfu (Apollonopolis Magna)
El-Kanais (Temple of Pan)
RED SEA
EGYPT
Syene
Elephantine
Berenice
R. Nile

EGYPT AND WESTERN ARABIA

Perhaps the one point that must be stressed concerning pilgrimage to Jerusalem is that the importance of this practice should not be overemphasized. Many Jews from even the farthest reaches of the Diaspora did make pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[17] But most Jews who lived at a great distance from Palestine rarely or never went to Jerusalem for the yearly feasts.[18] Entire families from the villages of Palestine often participated in the festivals in Jerusalem.[19] But the presence of women and children from the Diaspora was not a priority because only adult Jewish males were actually required to go to the three pilgrimage festivals.[20] Prohibitive travel expenses, the additional loss of income caused by long absences from home, family responsibilities, and other obstacles made it difficult for Jews in Egypt and other areas of the Diaspora to send the required male family members to Jerusalem. The same factors that made it difficult for Jewish men to go to Jerusalem assured that many of the Jewish women in Egypt would never celebrate any of the festivals in Jerusalem with the women from the villages of Palestine. Young children from Egypt, unlike children from Palestine, probably hardly ever went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem at all. Both in Palestine and in Egypt, disputes about the unique privileges and inherent value of the Jerusalem temple and its priesthood generated a diversity of attitudes toward the temple. These attitudes ranged from fervent devotion to ambivalence, apathy, and outright hostility.[21] All of these factors assured the development of local pilgrimage traditions in Egypt that provided alternatives to pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

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[17] Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.67–78; Acts 2:5–11; Josephus *Ant.* 17.26. Cf. later *M. Hall.* 4:10 (from Alexandria).

[18] Estimates of the number of pilgrims vary from as high as twelve million to as low as 62,500 (implied in Jeremias's margin of error, though he prefers the figure of 125,000); cf. Safrai, *Aliyah le-Regel*, 71–74; Safrai, "Temple," 901–902; Iancu, "Les Pèlerinages dans le Judaïsme," 346–47; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions During the New Testament Period* (Philadelphia 1969), 77–84. The upper end of this range, which is based on *t. Pes.* 4:3 and other rabbinic evidence, is clearly fantastic (it far exceeds a reasonable estimate for the Jewish population of the whole world in the first century). In *J.W.* 6.420–27, Josephus cites an actual count of Passover lambs sacrificed in ca. 65 CE, which was 255,600. From this figure he estimates that the total number of persons celebrating the Passover in Jerusalem was 2,700,000 (or 2,556,000 if his arithmetic is followed). But as Safrai and Jeremias point out, reconciling these figures with the size of Jerusalem, the area of the temple courts, and other evidence is difficult. Other grounds for making an estimate are no more secure. It is probable, however, that the largest proportion of the total number of the pilgrims consisted of Jews from Palestine and the immediately surrounding areas; Josephus *J.W.* 2.42–44; 5.513–16. The remaining number could have only constituted a small proportion of the Jews who lived in the Diaspora. Thus envoys who actually go to Jerusalem appear to be a small minority in Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.76–78; *Legat.* 311–15.

[19] E.g., Josephus *Ant.* 11.109; Luke 2:41–45; Matt. 21:15–16.

[20] Exod. 23:17; 34:23–24; Deut. 16:16; cf. *Mek. Kaspa* 4 to Exod. 23:17; *m. Hag.* 1:1; *Sifre Deut.* 143 to Deut. 16:16.

Philo, for example, belonged to one of the wealthiest families in Egypt and could certainly afford the expenses of pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Josephus *Ant.* 18.159–60, 259; 19.276–77; 20.100). His family's devotion to the temple was demonstrated by his brother's lavish expenditure on the temple gates (Josephus *J.W.* 5.205). Philo mentions at least one journey that he took to one of the festivals in Jerusalem (Philo *Prov.* 2.64; cf. *Spec. Leg.* 1.67–78). But Philo also describes in intimate detail the celebration of one of the standard pilgrimage festivals (probably Passover) among the Therapeutae (*Contempl.* 64–89).[22] His knowledge of this group may have derived from at least one occasion on which he chose not to go to Jerusalem for one of the pilgrimage festivals. Instead he probably made a rather short pilgrimage from Alexandria to the festival celebration in the community of the Therapeutae on the shore of the nearby Lake Mareotis (*Contempl.* 21–23). This does not necessarily mean that the Therapeutae never went on pilgrimages to Jerusalem. But it does suggest that neither Philo nor the Therapeutae believed that it was absolutely necessary to make an annual pilgrimage to all of the required pilgrimage festivals in Jerusalem. The gradual transformation of pilgrimage from a biblical commandment to an optional meritorious deed in rabbinic tradition was simply a formal enunciation of what had already been tacitly assumed by many Jews for centuries.[23]

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[21] E.g., Isa. 66:1; *1 Enoch* 90:72–74; *Sib. Or.* 4:1–17; 4QMMT; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.62–73, 74–79; 18.19; Philo, *Legat.* 184–96; *Mig.* 89–93; *Cher.* 98–101; *Quod. Det.* 20–21; *Spec. Leg.* 1.66–78, 153–55; Wis. 9:8; *Sib. Or.* 3.265–94, 564–67, 657–731, 767–75.

[22] The reference to the fifty days in *Contempl.* 65 has led Colson to assume that Philo is describing Pentecost; F.H. Colson, G.H. Whitaker, and Ralph Marcus, *Philo*, LCL (Cambridge 1929–1953), 9.152–153, 522–23. But Colson is aware that almost everything else said about the feast indicates that Passover was intended. The reference to a Passover celebrated at the end of a cycle of fifty days can probably be explained in terms of a calendar set up on a system of jubilees of days (49 days each). Distinctive calendars were sometimes used by other sectarian groups; cf. 4Q327, 4Q394 Section A.

[23] Cf. Safrai, *Aliyah le-Regel*, 24–41; Safrai, "Temple", 899–900. The original basis for exemption was Exod. 23:14, where the consonants in the phrase "three times" (*shalosh regalym*) were interpreted to require only pilgrimage by those who could travel on foot (*regel*); cf. the exemptions already in *m. Hag.* 1:1; *Mek. Kaspa* 4 to Exod. 23:14.

This did not deprive the temple of its symbolic role in Jewish identity. Philo and Josephus recognized that those Jews who did engage in pilgrimage played a crucial role in affirming national identity.[24] Those Jews who could not travel to Jerusalem could make a surrogate pilgrimage to the temple through their yearly half-shekel contributions. Philo complained that many of the priests were impoverished because not all Jews gave these offerings (Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.153–55). But Philo and other Jewish and non-Jewish sources testify to the vast wealth that poured into the temple from all over the world as a result of the half-shekel contributions and other offerings.[25] These offerings provided a way for many Jews to concretely identify themselves with the temple. The temple and its furnishings were sometimes used to express Jewish national identity on the coinage of Jerusalem.[26] In this role the imagery of the temple was just as distinctive as the imagery of the cult statue of Artemis on the coinage of Ephesus or the imagery of Sarapis and his temple on the coinage of Alexandria.[27] The menorah, which has remained a distinctive symbol of Jewish identity from antiquity to the present, is one of the lasting contributions of the temple to the symbolic universe of Jewish identity.[28] The deep personal identification with the temple shared by many Jews in Egypt is demonstrated by the horrific shock with which Philo and other Jews from Alexandria greeted the announcement of Caligula's plans to set up a statue of himself as Zeus in the temple (Philo *Legat.* 184–206; cf. 220, 265, 346). This reaction suggests that many Jews in Egypt later must have shared the psychological devastation experienced by Jews in Palestine when the temple was destroyed in 70 CE (e.g., cf. *2 Baruch; 4 Ezra*). Coins of the Bar Kochba period that picture the temple indicate that two generations after the destruction of the temple many Jews still could not conceive of a truly "Jewish" state without a temple.[29]

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[24] Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.69–70; Josephus *Ant.* 4.203–204. Cf. Coleman and John Elsner, *Pilgrimage*, 13; Safrai *et al.*, "Pilgrimage," 512.

[25] E.g., Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.76–78, 141–44; *Legat.* 216, 311–15; Josephus *Ant.* 14.110–113; 18.81–84; 20.311–13; Cicero *Pro Flacco* 28.66–69; Tacitus *Hist.* 5.5.1; 5.8.1; cf. Philo *Her.* 186; Matt. 17:24–27. Note also Josephus *J.W.* 7.218; Cassius Dio *Hist. Rom.* 66.7.2; *CPJ* 2.181; Suetonius *Dom.* 12.2. See notes in *GLAJJ* 1, pp. 198–99; 2, pp. 129–31. Cf. later *M. Shek.* 1:1–3; 2:1; 2:4; 3:1–3.

[26] Ya'akov Meshorer, *Jewish Coins of the Second Temple Period* (Tel Aviv 1967), pp. 61–62, 125, nos. 36, 36A (Mattathias Antigonus); pp. 159, 161–62, 165, nos. 165, 178–81, 199–201 (Bar Kokhba Revolt).

[27] For the cult statue of Artemis, see Andrew Burnett, Michel Amandry, and Pere Pau Ripollès, *Roman Provincial Coinage, Volume 1: From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius* (*44 BC–AD 69*) (London and Paris 1992), 1/1, nos. 2569–2573, 2590, 2592, 2613–2618. For Sarapis and possibly his temple, see Angelo Geissen, *Katalog Alexandrinischer Kaisermünzen der Sammlung des Instituts für Altertumskunde der Universität zu Köln*, Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sonderreihe Papyrologica Coloniensia 5; Bände 1–5 (Opladen 1974–1983), nos. 170, 214, 358, 446, 563, *et al.*

[28] E.g., menorahs on coins of Mattathias Antigonus in 37 BCE in Meshorer, *Jewish Coins*, pp. 61–62, 125, nos. 36, 36A. Otherwise the menorah is usually a symbol from after 70 CE. For menorahs in Egypt, see *JIGRE* nos. 21, 118, 119, 131, 133, 134, and notes.

In spite of the importance of the temple in Jerusalem as a vehicle for the expression and symbolic organization of various elements of Jewish identity, the experience of Jewish identity had never rested solely on the temple. For many Jews in Egypt pilgrimage traditions that had grown up around other Jewish temples, local synagogues, and other sites in Egypt may have played a role far more important in their own self-understanding than their rather tenuous relationship to the temple in Jerusalem.

B. *Pilgrimage to Jewish Temples and Synagogues in Egypt*

1. *The Jewish Temple at Elephantine in the Persian Period*

Jewish temples and synagogues in Egypt demonstrate continuity between the preexilic period and the postexilic period in the use of local alternatives to the Jerusalem temple. They also demonstrate the gradual emergence of ritual discontinuities with both preexilic Israelite tradition and non-Jewish traditions in Egypt.

The temple of Yahweh at Elephantine exemplifies this process.[30] The temple at Elephantine was almost certainly constructed before 525 BCE, probably before the fall of the Jerusalem temple in 586 BCE, and possibly as early as 650 BCE.[31] Travel between Elephantine and other sites in Egypt was frequent.[32] But travel specifically for the purpose of visiting the temple of Yahweh at Elephantine was probably limited in most cases to persons from the Jewish military garrisons in Elephantine and the surrounding region.[33]

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[29] Meshorer, *Jewish Coins*, pp. 92–94, 159, 161–62, 165, nos. 165, 178–81, 199–201.

[30] See Bezalel Porten with J. Joel Farber *et al.*, *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*, DMOA 22 (Leiden 1996), 74–276; Bezalel Porten, "Elephantine Papyri," *ABD* 2.445–55; Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1968). The sources are in Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English* 1–4 (Winona Lake, IN and Jerusalem 1986).

[31] *TAD* A4.7, 8, esp. A4.7.13–14 and A4.8.12–13, claim it was in use under the Egyptian kings before 525 BCE. Jewish mercenaries may have served Necho II (610–595 BCE) after Josiah's death and almost certainly aided Psamtik II (595–589 BCE). Porten, *Archives*, 8–16, argues that they were already serving Psamtik I (664–610

Numerous factors suggest a certain fluidity and permeability at the boundaries of Jewish identity in Elephantine. Worship of Yahweh was clearly a distinctive emphasis at Elephantine from the earliest stages of the Jewish colony.[34] Bezalel Porten has argued that the evidence for "Jewish cultic syncretism" in the temple of Yahweh is rather limited.[35] This may provide a needed corrective to the emphasis on "syncretism" at Elephantine in earlier research. But it does not negate the evidence that Jews from Elephantine simultaneously participated in a number of relatively independent religious systems.[36] Jews at Elephantine who worshiped Yahweh probably also sometimes worshiped in the Aramean temples of nearby Syene devoted to Bethel, the Queen of Heaven (Anath or Astarte), Banit, and Nabu.[37] The relatively peaceful relations with the local Egyptian community that characterized much of the history of the Jewish colony at Elephantine probably encouraged Jewish participation in local Egyptian festivals for Khnum, Sati, and Anukis.[38] The Aramean deities Eshembethel and Anathbethel appear as beneficiaries along with Yahweh in a list

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BCE) by ca. 650 BCE. Close relations between Judah and Egypt are much earlier. Cf. 2 Kgs 18:21; 23:31–24:7; Jer. 44:1; *Ep. Arist.* 13.

[32] E.g., *TAD* A3.8 (letter from Memphis); A3.3 (letter from Migdol); Jer. 44:1 (message from Tahpanes [Daphnae]). Porten, *Archives*, 35–42, argues that the major task of escorting caravans along the Nile gave the Jews of Elephantine "considerable mobility."

[33] E.g., only one of the many preserved letters sent from other sites in Egypt to Elephantine sends greetings to the temple of Yahweh; *TAD* A3.3.1.

[34] Porten, *Archives*, 105–186.

[35] Bezalel Porten, "The Religion of the Jews of Elephantine in Light of the Hermopolis Papyri," *JNES* 28 (1969):116–21. Porten argues that "the only clear case of Jewish cultic syncretism" at Elepantine is the figure of Anathyahu in *TAD* B7.3.1–3, which he identifies with a development of the worship of "the Queen of Heaven" mentioned in Jer. 7:16–18; 44:15–26.

[36] Even a few examples of "syncretism" presuppose an earlier and wider practice of participation in diverse but relatively independent traditions. Syncretism cannot occur without some knowledge of the independent traditions being syncretized.

[37] Cf. the temples mentioned in *TAD* A2.1.1 (temple of Bethel, temple of Queen of Heaven); A2.2.1 and A2.4.1 (temple of Banit); A2.3.1 (temple of Nabu). See below and Porten, "Religion," 116–21; Porten *et al., Elephantine Papyri*, 89 notes.

[38] Cf. the oath by Sati in *TAD* B2.8.4–5. In *TAD* A4.3.7, the Jewish writer assumes that Khnum is a living god who can motivate his devotees to hostility. This does not imply devotion, but other Jews who shared the same perspective on Khnum may have felt the need to win his favor on occasion.

of two-shekel contributions made by Jews to Yahweh.[39] Oath formulas used by Jews from Elephantine appealed to Yahweh, Egyptian deities, and Aramaean deities (e.g., Sati, Anathyahu, and Ḥerembethel or Bethel).[40] Jews at Elephantine seem to have preferred Hebrew theophoric names derived from the name of Yahweh (e.g., Jedaniah, Mibtahiah).[41] But they sometimes intermarried with Egyptians and Arameans.[42] Individuals from Elephantine who were usually given the Aramaic ethnic designation "Judahites" (*yhudyn*) were also sometimes called "Arameans" (*ʾarmayn*).[43]

These examples are consistent with the polytheistic and multicultural traditions of preexilic Israelite identity. From the earliest stages of Israelite history Israelite identity was probably shared by a mixed amalgamation of persons descended from nomadic tribal groups, immigrants from Egypt and other regions, and indigenous Canaanites.[44] Jewish identity at Elephantine was defined broadly enough to include much of the same ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity.

New social dynamics were introduced into Elephantine when the priests in Jerusalem obtained the support of the Persian king to encourage a series of ritual changes at Elephantine in ca. 419 BCE.[45]

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[39] *TAD* C3.15.

[40] *TAD* B2.2.4–7 (Yahweh); B7.1.4 (Yahweh); B2.8.4–5 (Sati); B7.3.1–3 (Anathyahu); B7.2.7–8 (Ḥerembethel or Bethel). K. van der Toorn, "Ḥerem-Bethel and Elephantine Oath Procedure," *ZAW* 98 (1986): 282-85, argues that "Ḥerembethel the god" in B7.2.7–8 should be understood as some object called "the property of Bethel the god."

[41] Porten, *Archives*, 133–50; Porten *et al.*, *Elephantine Papyri*, 84–88.

[42] E.g., Mibtahiah and Eshor, *TAD* B2.5 and B2.6; Anani (a temple official) and Tamet, *TAD* B3.3. Evidence for intermarriage with Arameans is more indirect. Names are an admittedly unreliable criterion, but the consistent usage of Hebrew names in the Jewish colony might suggest that Aramean names that appear in Jewish contexts and Hebrew names that appear in Aramean contexts are the result of intermarriage. If Shabbethai is indeed a Hebrew name, then examples include Sinkishir b. Shabbethai (Hebrew name) in a list of Aramean witnesses in *TAD* B3.9.10–12 and Shabbethai (Hebrew name) b. Shug, who is an Aramean in *TAD* A2.1.10; and Reia (Aramaic name) among Jews in *TAD* 4.4.5. See Porten, *Archives*, 148–49, 174; Porten *et al.*, *Elephantine Papyri*, 84–88.

[43] E.g., Meshullum b. Zaccur is a "Judean" in *TAD* B3.1.2–3 and B3.6.2 but called an "Aramean" in *TAD* B3.3.2. Mahseiah b. Jedaniah and his daughter Mibtahiah are "Judeans" in *TAD* B2.3.1–3, but she is called an "Aramean" in *TAD* B2.8.2–3 (cf. B2.2.3; B5.5.1–3). Mibtahiah's children are "Judeans" in *TAD* B2.9.1–4 but call themselves "Arameans" in *TAD* B2.11.2. Cf. Porten, *Archives*, 33–34.

[44] This assumes some truth in each of the major models of Israelite origins. For a survey, see William G. Dever, "Israel, History of: Archaeology and the Israelite 'Conquest'," *ABD* 3.545–58.

[45] *TAD* A4.1.

These changes included a new emphasis on observing the Passover, which had not been celebrated consistently at Elephantine in the preexilic period.[46] The role of a young ram and stories about the Egyptians in the Passover celebration seem to have been especially offensive to the local Egyptian priests of Khnum.[47] Khnum was pictured as a ram and embodied in the sacred rams cared for by his priests. The new emphasis on the Passover celebration was therefore probably viewed by the local priests of Khnum as a direct attack on the worship of Khnum.[48] The tension that this created ultimately played a major role in the violent destruction of the temple of Yahweh in 410 BCE.[49] Anti-Jewish polemics from Egypt in the Hellenistic and Roman periods show that emphasis on the role of the Passover and other exodus traditions in defining Jewish identity continued to be a major source of conflict in these periods between Jews and individuals inspired by native Egyptian mythology.[50]

2. *Jewish Temples and Synagogues in the Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods*

Egyptian polemics suggest that native Egyptian temples were often desecrated and appropriated by Jewish mercenaries serving in the Persian, Macedonian, and Ptolemaic armies.[51] In most cases the appropriation of these temples was probably only a temporary consequence of military conquest.[52] But in some cases Egyptian temples and holy sites may have been permanently transformed into Jewish temples.[53] A later stage in the development of these Jewish temples may be implied in the enigmatic reference to the Jewish "temples" in Egypt in the letter of the Jewish priest Onias IV in ca. 160 BCE (Josephus *Ant.* 13.65–68). One point emphasized in this letter is the ritual diversity among the Jewish temples in Egypt. This makes it difficult to exclude the possibility that the term embraced a wide variety of Jewish ritual centers, including both what modern researchers might call "synagogues" and institutions that by almost any standard would be properly called "temples." Even if this letter is not authentic, it probably rests on an accurate tradition concerning the early stages of local Jewish sanctuaries in Egypt in the Hellenistic period.

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[46] Cf. 2 Kgs 23:21–23; 2 Chr. 30:1–27; 35:1–19. The Passover still may have been celebrated before this at Elephantine; Porten, *Archives*, 128–33.

[47] *TAD* A4.3.7; A4.5.3–4; 4.7.4–28 (cf. A4.8.3–27); Porten, *Archives*, 128–33, 284–93. Cf. below for references to Egyptian hostility to Jewish exodus traditions.

[48] Cf. the examples of Egyptian violence over perceived violations against sacred animals in Plutarch *Iside* 72 (380A–C); Diodorus Sic. 1.83.

[49] *TAD* A4.1; A4.3, A4.5; A4.7; A4.8; A4.9. Porten suggests that the temple may have been rebuilt or that its site was at least not initially reused; see *TAD* A4.7; A4.8; A4.9; B3.12; and discussion in Porten *et al., Elephantine Papyri*, 80, 249 note 37; Porten, "Elephantine Papyri," 449.

[50] On exodus traditions in Jewish identity, see Exod. 12:14–27; 23:14–15; Lev. 23:39–43; Deut. 16:1–3; Ezekiel Trag. *Exagoge* 167–171 in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.12; *Jub.* 49:1–23; *m. Pesach.* 9:4–5. Cf. the "impious Jews" in *CPJ* 3.520. On anti-Jewish versions of the exodus, see Josephus *Ap.* 1.223–319; 2.1–32. Cf. Claude Aziza, "L'utilisation polémique du récit de l'Exode chez les écrivains alexandrins (IV$^{\text{ème}}$ siècle av. J.-C.-I$^{\text{er}}$ siècle ap. J.-C.)," *ANRW* II.20.1 (1987):41–65. But note the qualifications of John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York 1983), 39–54, 62–63, who argues that Egyptian anti-Jewish themes were restricted primarily to priestly circles with no concrete impact until used as propaganda in conflicts over civic status in Alexandria. Priests could easily have influenced attitudes and events much earlier, however, as the destruction of the temple in Elephantine demonstrates.

[51] Josephus *Ap.* 1.76, 249, 305–306, 310–11; possibly *Ap.* 1.289; Sir Robert Mond and Oliver H. Myers, *The Bucheum* 1–3, Egypt Exploration Society Memoir 41

The actions of Onias demonstrate how social conflict tended to multiply Jewish ritual centers in the Second Temple period. Onias was the son of a legitimate high priest but was prevented from becoming high priest initially by his age and later by violent priestly disputes in Jerusalem.[54] After Onias fled to Egypt he created a temple of his own in Heliopolis with an altar copied directly from the one in Jerusalem and a sacrificial system administered by Jewish priests and Levites.[55] Onias's temple was built on the site of an abandoned Egyptian temple, possessed structural similarities with polytheistic temples, and derived revenue from temple properties like an

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(London 1934), 1.13; 2.6–9, plates 40.8, 41.9, esp. no. 9 line 8; Jean Yoyette, "L'Egypte ancienne et les origines de l'antijudaïsme," *RHR* 163 (1963):133–43, esp. 135–36; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (3 vols; Berkeley and Los Angeles 1980), 3.38; cf. 3.45–48. Note also Josephus *Ant.* 13.65–73. Cf. *Ep. Arist.* 13; Josephus *Ap.* 1.183–204; *TAD* A4.8, esp. A4.7.13–14 and A4.8.12–13, which might suggest that Jews were with the armies of Cambyses destroying temples. Cf. Strabo 17.1.27 C805; 17.1.46 C816.

[52] E.g., the Jewish "foreigners from Yahou" who once held the temple of Amun at Thebes had left; Mond and Myers, *Bucheum*, 2.7 (no. 9 line 8); Yoyette, "Egypte ancienne," 135.

[53] This was probably especially common when an Egyptian temple had already ceased to function as a cult center, as in the case of the temple at Heliopolis; Josephus *Ant.* 13.65–73.

[54] Josephus *Ant.* 12.224–26, 237–40, 387–88; 13.62; *J.W.* 1.31–33; 7.423; 2 Macc. 4:1–50.

[55] For sacrifice, see Josephus *Ant.* 13.64, 68, 72–73; *J.W.* 7.432; Edouard Naville, *The Mound of the Jew and the City of Onias*, and F.Ll. Griffiths, *The Antiquities of Tell el Yahudiyeh*, Egypt Exploration Fund Memoir 7 (London 1890), 53; R. Mesnil du Buisson, "Le Temple d'Onias et le Camp Hyksôs à Tell el-Yahoudiyé," *BIFAO* 35 (1935):59–71, esp. 62. For an excellent history of the temple, see Gideon Bohak,

Egyptian temple (Josephus *J.W.* 7.426–32; *Ant.* 13.65–68). But at the same time Onias's temple imitated the Jerusalem temple in a number of its features and operated in an obvious tension with the temple in Jerusalem (Josephus *J.W.* 1.33; 7.428, 431–32; *Ant.* 12.387–88; 13.63, 67; 285; 20.236).[56] The Oniad priests granted the temple in Heliopolis a prestige that, as far as can be known from available evidence, was not possessed by other Jewish sanctuaries in Egypt. But Philo does not even mention it and other Jews in Egypt clearly had more interest in the temple in Jerusalem.[57] The Oniad priests at Heliopolis ultimately may have given up their own opposition to the worship in the temple in Jerusalem. The Oniad priests may have looked on the rise of the Hasmoneans with approving eyes because the Oniads shared some of the same enemies as the Hasmoneans.[58] Eventually the Oniads seem to have given their support to the Hasmoneans who controlled the Jerusalem temple.[59]

The preservation of rabbinic traditions about the temple at Heliopolis indicates how it excited the imagination of Jews outside of Egypt.[60] Some Jews from outside Egypt must have made visits to this temple partly out of sheer curiosity. But the temple at Heliopolis also held a powerful latent potential for the localization of Jewish national identity. This became especially clear when the temple of Jerusalem

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Joseph and Aseneth and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis, SBLEJL 10 (Atlanta 1996), 19–40. On *Aseneth* (which is to be preferred over the longer title *Joseph and Aseneth*), cf. Ross Shepard Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph: A Late Antique Tale of the Biblical Patriarch and His Egyptian Wife, Revisited* (New York 1997), esp. the chapter on provenance. A Palestinian provenance for *Aseneth* is more likely than one in Egypt; cf. water sources (streams that flood with winter rains and springs, not the Nile); flora found in Egypt but more typical of Palestine (oaks, cypress, and luscious olive trees; cf. Strabo 17.1.35 C809); interest in Moabite territory (not just the name of the Moabite Joakim).

[56] See Robert Hayward, "The Jewish Temple at Leontopolis: A Reconsideration," *JJS* 33 (1982):429–43.

[57] A possible allusion may be found in *Sib. Or.* 5.492–511; John J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," *OTP* 1.405 note h4. But the priest in this passage seems to be an Egyptian and the text is probably nothing more than an unrelated inference from Isa. 19:18–25. Cf. the Jerusalem temple, e.g., Josephus *Ant.* 13.72–79; Philo *Legat.* 184–96; *Mig.* 89–93 (but note *Cher.* 98–101; *Det.* 20–21); *Som.* 2.246; Wis. Sol. 9:8; *Sib. Or.* 3.265–94, 564–67, 657–731, 767–75; 5.397–413; 3 Macc. 1:9–2:24.

[58] Cf. 1 Macc. 7:5–25; Josephus *Ant.* 12.387.

[59] Josephus *Ant.* 13.348–355. Cf. Bohak, *Temple*, 32–34. Isaiah 19:18–19 was used to legitimate the temple in Heliopolis but did not imply its superiority over the temple in Jerusalem; Josephus *J.W.* 7.420–432; *Ant.* 13.62–71.

[60] Cf. *m. Menah.* 13:10; *t. Menah.* 13:12–15; *b. Menah.* 109b; *b. ʿAvod. Zar.* 52b; *b. Meg.* 10a; *y. Yoma* 6.3 (43d); Bohak, *Temple*, 39.

fell in 70 CE. The temple in Heliopolis immediately acquired some of the Jerusalem temple's value as a symbol of national identity. This was quickly recognized by the Romans. The Romans closed the temple at Heliopolis in 73 or 74 CE to prevent its use as a rallying point for Jewish rebels.[61]

The synagogue also competed with the Jerusalem temple for a share of symbolic space in ritual function, national identity, and social influence. In Palestine the institution of the synagogue probably developed out of the same village and town councils that had sponsored the local polytheistic cults during the preexilic period.[62] Local priests and Levites sincerely devoted to the Jerusalem temple were active in many of the communities that gathered in the village synagogues in Palestine. Competition with the temple was therefore not always intentional. Nevertheless, synagogues and other local institutions independent from the temple were by their very existence susceptible to promoting the rise of influential local leaders. One of the major themes of Josephus's *Jewish War* is the way in which these local leaders often came into direct conflict with the national leadership in the temple.

Evidence for the synagogue appears in Egypt much earlier than in Palestine.[63] Most synagogues in Egypt served strictly local functions, such as places for gathering on festivals, community council halls, community archives, and central locations in which offerings were collected to be taken to Jerusalem.[64] But synagogues also shared a number of features with Hellenistic and, to a lesser degree, Egyptian temples.[65] These included: (1) the perception that ἱερόν ("holy place" or "temple") was an appropriate designation;[66] (2) religious functions epitomized in the preference for the designation προσευχή ("place of prayer");[67] (3) annexed structures associated with synagogues that might suggest temple architecture, such as an ἐξέδρα (hall, porch, or some other type of annex), a πυλών (gateway, possibly to a courtyard), and possibly sacred precincts and attached properties;[68] (4) royal grants of the right of asylum;[69] (5) the titles of various personnel, possibly including the νακόρος (νεωκόρος; "temple warden");[70] (6) dedications and other honors expressing loyalty (but not worship) to rulers;[71] (7) the reading of sacred texts stored in the building;[72]

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[61] Josephus, *J.W.* 7.420–22, 433–36. See Bohak, *Temple*, 37–39.

[62] Cf. Lee I. Levine, "The Nature and Origin of the Palestinian Synagogue Reconsidered," *JBL* 115 (1996):425–48.

[63] For what follows, see Rachel Hachlili, "The Origin of the Synagogue: A Re-Assessment," *JSJ* 28 (1997):34–47; Aryeh Kasher, "Synagogues as 'Houses of Prayer' and 'Holy Places' in the Jewish Communities of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt," *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery*, ed. Dan Urman and Paul V.M. Flesher, SPB 47 (2 vols; Leiden 1995), 1.205–225; J. Gwyn Griffiths, "Egypt and the Rise of the Synagogue," *JTS* 38 (1987):1–15; Shaye J.D. Cohen, "Pagan and Christian Evidence on the Ancient Synagogue," *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee I. Levine (Philadelphia 1987), 159–81; Alf Thomas Kraabel, "The Diaspora Synagogue: Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence Since Sukenik," *ANRW* II.19.1 (1979):477–510; Paul-Eugène Dion, "Synagogues et Temples dans L'Egypte Hellénistique," *Science et Esprit* 29 (1977):45–75; Martin Hengel, "Proseuche und Synagogue: Jüdische Gemeinde, Gotteshaus und Gottesdienst in der Diaspora und in Palästina," *Tradition und Glaube: Das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt. Festschrift für Karl Georg Kuhn zum 65 Geburtstag*, ed. Gert Jeremias, Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, und Hartmut Stegmann (Göttingen 1971), 157–83.

[64] See esp. Kasher, "Synagogues," 205–220.

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[65] Synagogues in Egypt were no different from synagogues elsewhere in the Diaspora in giving evidence of a tendency to adopt local customs and adapt to local conditions; cf. Kraabel, "Diaspora Synagogue," 477–510.

[66] Josephus *Ap.* 2.10; Minucius Felix *Octavius* 10.4 (quoted in *GLAJJ* 1, p. 201 note 69); 33.2 (*GLAJJ* no. 201); possibly 3 Macc 2:28. Cf. Josephus *Ant.* 13.65–68 (cf. above); *Ap.* 1.209; *J.W.* 4.45; 7.144; *JIGRE* 9; Tacitus *Hist.* 5.5.4. 3 Macc. 2:28 could refer to non-Jewish temples; Victor A. Tcherikover, "The Third Book of Maccabees," *ScrHier* 7 (1961):1–26, esp. 3–5. But it might reflect a period when "synagogue" terminology was still fluid. See Cohen, "Pagan and Christian Evidence on the Ancient Synagogue," 161–65

[67] E.g., προσευχή in *JIGRE* 9, 13, 22, 25, 27, 28, 105 (?), 117, 125, 126; *CPJ* 2.432.57; Philo, *Flacc.* 41, 45, 47, 48, 49, 53, 122; *Legat.* 132, 134, 137, 138, 148, 152, 156, 157, 165, 191, 346, 371. The εὐχεῖον in *CPJ* 2.432.60 might be unrelated to the earlier προσευχή. In *JIGRE* 20 the word συναγωγή probably refers to the assembly, not the building. Philo uses συναγωγή when he is relying on sources or the terminology of others; *Post.* 67; *Agr.* 44; *Prob.* 81; so also συναγώγιον (probably equivalent to σύνοδος rather than the building) in *Legat.* 311; *Som.* 2.127.

[68] Philo *Flac.* 48; *JIGRE* 9, 24, 28 and accompanying notes, though no distinction between Egyptian temples and Jewish temples can be made simply on the basis of the use of πυλών (monumental gateway); cf. LSJ. s.v. The terms referring to "sacred precincts" are not complete in *JIGRE* 9, but additional lands or annexes are clearly implied.

[69] *JIGRE* 125.

[70] *CPJ* 1.129. This may be only the terminology of the writer, whose ethnic identity is uncertain. Hellenistic clubs and guilds provide better analogies; e.g., *JIGRE* 18, 20, 24; *CPJ* 1.138. Cf. Colin Roberts, Theodore C. Skeat, and Arthur Darby Nock, "The Gild of Zeus Hypsistos," *HTR* 29 (1936):39–88.

[71] *JIGRE* 13, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 117; Philo *Flac.* 48–50; cf. Jewish temples in Josephus *Ant.* 13.67; Philo *Legat.* 157. Cf. P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (3 vols; Oxford 1972), 1.282–84; Dion, "Synagogues et Temples," 55–57.

[72] For reading, e.g., Philo, *Contempl.* 31; *Som.* 2.123–27; *Spec.* 2.62–64; *Prob.* 81; *Legat.* 156–57; *Mos.* 2.215–16. Storage of scrolls may be inferred from later practice and from biblical fragments in the Masada synagogue. For festival readings in Egyptian temples, see R.O. Faulkner, "The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus—1," *JEA* 22 (1936): 121–40. For storage of sacred books in Egyptian temples, see Lichtheim, *Ancient*

(8) activities and terminology influenced by Hellenistic mystery cults (though the influence of the mystery cults was usually far less pervasive than Goodenough believed).[73]

The similarities between synagogues and non-Jewish temples may have included other ritual functions. Basic human needs for guidance and healing had aided the transformation of some Egyptian temples into oracle sanctuaries and healing shrines in the Hellenistic period.[74] The similarities between the synagogues and the polytheistic temples of Egypt raise the question of whether Jewish temples and synagogues in Egypt ever functioned in these same ways.

The study of Scripture in the synagogue may have occasionally taken on the nature of an oracular consultation. Many Jews understood the Scriptures on the analogy of a body of oracles with direct application to the readers. The Qumran pesharim operated on this understanding within an eschatological framework. The pattern of interpretation in the pesharim was probably even directly modeled upon oracular dream interpretation.[75] First Maccabees 3:48 explicitly compares the consultation of Scripture for specific guidance to polytheistic oracular consultation. Philo and other Jewish authors from Alexandria also discuss the Scriptures using language normally

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Egyptian Literature, 3.96; P. Graf (G. 29787) frags. 2–4 and P. Rainer (G. 19813) line 52, in Ludwig Koenen, "Die Prophezeiungen des 'Töpfers'," *ZPE* 2 (1968):178–209.

[73] Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (New Haven 1935); cf. Gary Lease, "Jewish Mystery Cults Since Goodenough," *ANRW* II.20.2 (1987):858–80. E.g., Philo *Opif.* 69–71; *Det.* 13, 86–90; *Spec. Leg.* 3.71, 84, 100; *Cher.* 27, 48–49; Ps. Ps.-Phocylides 228–29; Artapanus in Eusebius *PE* 9.27.3–6; Aristobulus in Eusebius *PE* 13.13.4–5; possibly σύνοδος in *CPJ* 1.138. See especially M. Lafargue, "Orphica," *OTP* 2.795–801, and the full discussion of Jewish Orphic texts in Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, SBLTT 20, 30, 39, 40; Pseudepigrapha Series 10, 12, 13, 14 (4 vols; Chico, CA and Atlanta, GA 1983–1996), volume 4 (*Orphica*). In addition, compare Philo's allegorical interpretation with the Orphic *P. Derveni*. For recent literature on *P. Derveni*, see Andri Laks and Glenn W. Most, eds., *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus* (New York 1997).

[74] J.D. Ray, "Ancient Egypt," *Oracles and Divination*, ed. Michael Loewe and Carmen Blacker (Boulder, CO 1981), 174–90; Ewa Laskowaska-Kusztal, *Le sanctuaire ptolémaïque de Deir el-Bahari*, ed. Kazimierz Michalowski, Deir El-Bahari 3 (Warsaw 1984), 118–27; Michel Malaise, "Pèlerinages et Pèlerins dans L'Egypte Ancienne," *Histoire des Pèlerinages non Chrétiens: Entre Magique et Sacré: le Chemin des Dieux*, ed. Jean Chelini et Henry Branthomme (Paris 1987), 55–82.

[75] E.g., cf. 1QpHab 7.1–8 with Dan. 2:17–30. See Jeffrey H. Tigay, "An Early Technique of Aggadic Exegesis," *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, ed. Hayim Tadmor and Moshe Weinfeld (Jerusalem 1983), 169–89; George Brooke, "Qumran Pesher: Towards the Redefinition of a Genre," *RevQ* 10 (1981):483–503.

applied to sacred oracles stored in polytheistic temples.[76] Philo and other Jewish allegorists learned their allegorical methods from the way that the writings of Homer, Orphic poetry, and other texts with canonical status were interpreted in the Hellenistic world.[77] Some Jews must have also borrowed other methods from their Hellenistic neighbors to obtain personal oracles from the Scriptures in a way similar to that in which their neighbors used canonical texts as oracular sources.[78]

The use of synagogues as healing sanctuaries is more difficult to demonstrate. The use of Scripture in magical spells is well attested both within and outside of Egypt.[79] Not all Jewish magical spells and amulets contained Scripture verses.[80] But those that did contain Scripture sometimes may have been produced by scribes who copied the Scripture verses directly from biblical scrolls stored in synagogues.[81] It may even be tempting to suggest that what appears to be merely an indirect rebuke of Jesus for healing on the Sabbath in Luke 13:14 may also have been an exhortation to maintain a custom by which Jewish healers and magicians used the synagogue for healing rituals on weekdays.[82] But little solid evidence can be adduced in support of this conjecture. Shaye Cohen's statements concerning the localization of healing and magical activity in the much later synagogues of Antioch are appealing.[83] But the evidence that he offers in support of these statements is unfortunately rather tenuous.[84] Magical amulets have been found in synagogues from the late Byzantine period.[85] But they appear to have been made outside the synagogues and only later were brought into the synagogues to enhance the ritual power of the spells and prayers that they contained.[86] The date of this evidence is in any case obviously rather late for our purposes. There is at present no solid evidence for the consistent use of any synagogue in Egypt as a healing shrine in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods.

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[76] Philo, *Cher.* 48–49; *Det.* 13; *Legat.* 210; *Fug.* 9, 50, 158, 202; *Mut.* 7, 90, 139, 143, 152; *Som.* 1.64; *Mos.* 2.97; 2.188–92, esp. 2.188. Cf. *Ep. Arist.* 177; Artapanus in Eusebius *PE* 9.27.3–6 (Moses himself taught philosophy and the "sacred letters" used by Egyptian priests); Aristobulus in Eusebius *PE* 13.13.4–5. Note also Strabo 16.2.38–39 C761–762; possibly Josephus *J.W.* 4.386–88; 6.109–110, 310–315.

[77] E.g., Philo's method is remarkably similar to that used ca. 400 BCE by the author of the text found in *P. Derveni* to derive mystical-philosophical applications from an Orphic text.

[78] E.g., the Homer oracle in *PGM* 7.1–148. Cf. the use of Homer in *PGM* 4.471–74; 4.2145–2240.

[79] E.g., Deut. 32:1–3 and other texts in Roy Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze Lamellae, Part 1: Published Texts of Known Provenance*, Papyrologica Coloniensia 22/1 (Opladen 1994), no. 32, pp. 126–54. See also Ps. 91 in 11QPsAp(a) (= 11Q11); Ps. 91 in *PGM* 83.1–20; Exod. 15:26 in *M. Sanh.* 10:1. See discussion in Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem 1993), 22–31.

[80] E.g., Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets*, no. 51, pp. 265–66.

[81] Cf. Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets*, no. 32, pp. 126–54, which includes a copy of Deut. 32:1–3 Aquila and allusions to other passages in Aquila's version. See also no. 56 and comments, pp. 312–13, though "one who wrote down Biblical verses from memory" obviously was not copying from the scrolls.

[82] The classic comparison between Jesus and contemporary Jewish magicians is Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco 1978).

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[83] Cohen, "Pagan and Christian Evidence on the Ancient Synagogue," 168; followed by Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets*, 127, 312–13.

[84] Not a single one of the passages from Chrysostom's *Adversus Judaeos* cited in Cohen, "Pagan and Christian Evidence on the Ancient Synagogue," 168, provides indisputable evidence that healing rituals took place in synagogues. Chrysostom appears to be condemning two distinct practices: going to Jews for healing and going to synagogue. In *Adv. Jud.* 8.5 (*PG* 48.935) Chrysostom refers to magical assistance for healing obtained from Jews. But he does not actually say that this assistance was obtained in synagogues. In *Adv. Jud.* 8.8 (*PG* 48.940–41) Chrysostom refers to Christians going to synagogues and also says that Christians seek "help" from Jews. But once again he does not say that this "help" was dispensed in the synagogues. In *Adv. Jud.* 1.6 (*PG* 48.852), contra Cohen, the word παρακαθεύδειν probably does not refer to incubation as was done at a shrine of Asclepius. The word παρακαθεύδω usually refers to sleeping beside someone to guard him or her; e.g., Judith 10:20; Achilles Tatius *Leucippe et Clitophone* 3.10.5 (cf. 3.10.1). This is how the word is used by Chrysostom himself in *Epist. 2 ad Cor. Hom.* (*2 Corinthians Hom.*) 2.4 (*PG* 61.398); *Ad Stagirium a Daemone Vex.* 1.1 (*PG* 47.426). This suggests that in *Adv. Jud.* 1.6 (*PG* 48.852) Chrysostom is simply referring to the act of maintaining a close relationship with the synagogue or the people in it. In this passage Chrysostom states, "The books [of Scripture] do not make the [synagogue] holy ... For ... demons dwell in the place. I am saying this not only about the synagogue here, but also about the one in Daphne. For there the pit (of perdition) is more evil, which they call (the synagogue) of Matrona. For I have heard that even many of the faithful go up there and keep guard over (παρακαθεύδειν) the place. But may it not be that I ever call these persons faithful. For the holy place of Matrona and that of Apollo are equally profane to me" (*Adv. Jud.* 1.6; *PG* 48.851–52). I see nothing in these statements that suggests incubation. Chrysostom does refer to the temples of Sarapis and Apollo in this passage, but only to make the rather unfriendly point that a synagogue is a dwelling of demons just like a pagan temple. In *Adv. Jud.* 1.9 (I assume that Cohen's "1.8" is a mistake; *PG* 48.855) Chrysostom refers to going to synagogues and the attractions of Matrona. But once again he does not say that healing occurred in these places. Chrysostom probably would have been pleased to condemn magical rituals in the synagogues if they were part of the regular services. His failure to actually say that magical healing rituals were part of the synagogue services suggests that they were not. The most that can be said is that Chrysostom implies that the Jews that Christians met in synagogues were often the same ones who offered healing.

[85] Naveh and Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae*, 43–50, no. 16 (from north wall of synagogue of ancient Meroth [?] in Horvat Marish, Upper Galilee, early 7th century CE); Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem and Leiden 1985), 16, 37–38, 90–101, nos. 11, 12, 13 (all three from the apse of the synagogue of ancient Ma'on at Nirim in the Negev, 6th–7th century CE).

[86] Naveh and Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae*, no. 16, is an amulet for obtaining

Jewish sources of oracles and healing rituals certainly were available to Jews in Egypt. Numerous examples (both male and female) show that consultation with Jewish magicians, prophets, dream interpreters, wonder workers, and religious specialists of other kinds provided important avenues for Jews in antiquity to obtain oracles and supernatural healings.[87] Members of Levitical and priestly families may have played a disproportionate role in granting oracles because of the common belief that they possessed *ex officio* or innate prophetic powers.[88] Jewish pilgrimage to individual religious specialists and isolated ascetic communities to obtain oracles or simply to draw upon

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power over the townspeople. If it was deposited in the synagogue intentionally, the purposes were probably to strengthen its efficacy by placing it where many of the townspeople gathered together and to take advantage of the ritual power of the synagogue itself. In Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 90–92, nos. 11, 12, 13, "some" still had fragments of the cloth wrappings and one still had the thread by which it was suspended. Naveh and Shaked state that this could indicate that the amulets were worn on the body around the neck or hung from the wall "near or behind the Ark of the Law, or even from the Ark itself." Either use would suggest that the amulets were brought into the synagogue to enhance their ritual power, but nothing suggests they were made in the synagogue itself. Thus Naveh and Shaked state (p. 16), "The amulet was put [in the apse] in order for it to be as close as possible to the spot which served as a gate for communication (through prayer) with heaven. In this connection one may recall that a favourite modern spot for placing appeals to divine help is in the Wailing Wall."

[87] E.g., prophets in Josephus *Ant.* 13.311–13; *J.W.* 1.78–80; 6.285–87; 300–309; Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.64–65; *T. Job* 46:1–50:3, esp. 47:1–2, which implies women offering oracles as a profession; visionary or dream interpreter in Juvenal *Sat.* 6.542–47, again a female working for pay; cf. Philo *Som.* 2.1–4; wonder workers in Josephus *Ant.* 14.22–28; Mark 1:23–45; magicians in Acts 8:9–24; 13:6–12; 19:13–19. Cf. later in *m. Taan.* 3:8; *m. Ber.* 5:5; *m. Sot.* 9:15; *m. Sukk.* 5:4; *Sepher Ha-Razim.* Members of the rabbinic movement, however, are almost irrelevant for our period (especially in Egypt), even in the first few decades after the fall of the temple in Jerusalem; e.g., see Lee I. Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem and New York 1989); Shaye J.D. Cohen, "Epigraphical Rabbis," *JQR* 72 (1981):1–17.

[88] Cf. Philo *Migr.* 169; *Congr.* 132; Josephus *J.W.* 1.68–69; *Ant.* 3.192; 11.327–28; 13.282–83, 299–300; *T. Levi* 2:3–5:7; 8:1–9:2; *Aseneth* 22:13 (8–9); 23:8; 26:6 (7); John 11:51. Cf. Josephus *Ap.* 1.54; *Life* 1–2; with *J.W.* 3.399–407. If Philo was from a priestly family this might explain his own mystical inclinations as expressions of a prophetic self-understanding. For Philo's personal mystical experiences, see, e.g., *Cher.* 27, 48–49; *Som.* 2.252–53; for his possible priestly descent, see Daniel R. Schwartz, "Philo's Priestly Descent," *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel*, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn, Earle Hilgert, and Burton L. Mack, Scholars Press Homage Series (Chico, CA 1984), 155–71.

their wisdom bore some resemblance to later Christian journeys to visit similar individuals and groups.[89]

The ephemeral giftings of charismatic individuals, however, usually must be distinguished from the permanent nature of local synagogues. Jews who possessed prophetic gifts were usually not formally attached to any specific building or institution. The priesthood at the Jewish temple in Heliopolis and charismatic individuals that happened to hold offices in other Jewish temples and synagogues may have occasionally granted these institutions some of the attributes of an oracle sanctuary. But evidence is rather limited for travels to Jewish ritual sites to obtain oracles like those offered in preexilic Israelite sanctuaries or in the non-Jewish sanctuaries in Delphi, Dodona, and the Siwa Oasis. Philo's descriptions of the weekly communal gatherings in Egyptian synagogues suggest that the study of Scripture usually had more of the characteristics of teaching than of a ritual procedure for healing or an oracular consultation.[90]

The only synagogue in Egypt known to have consistently drawn visitors from outside of its immediate neighborhood was the massive colonnaded synagogue in Alexandria.[91] For Jews outside of Egypt the main interest of this synagogue was probably that of a tourist site.[92] Probably the main attraction of this synagogue for Jews in Egypt was that it may have been the location in which the powerful Jewish council in Alexandria gathered.[93] For the Jews who actually attended this synagogue on a regular basis, their short weekly journeys to the synagogue provided a more consistent expression of Jewish identity than the rare pilgrimages that they may have made to the temple in Jerusalem.

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[89] Philo *Prob* 63–64; 72–91; *Contempl.* (all; probably based on a personal visit); Josephus *Life* 10–12; Luke 3:2–3 and pars. See C. Wilfred Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity: From Its Origins to 451 CE,* Coptic Studies 2 (Leiden 1990), 101–106. Among Jewish examples I do not cite *Hist. Rechabites* because it is probably thoroughly Christian, contra J.H. Charlesworth, "History of the Rechabites," *OTP* 2.444–45. If a document is as heavily interpolated by Christians as Charlesworth admits, perhaps it is best to take more seriously the possibility that it was a Christian creation in the first place. Rabbinic tradition certainly cannot be used as a criterion for evaluating how Jewish a document is, but it is still surprising that *Hist. Rechabites* has so many parallels to Christian monastic texts and almost no common ground at all with the indisputably Jewish Rechabite traditions in *Mek. Amalek* 4 to Exod. 18:27.

[90] Philo *Mos.* 2.214–16; *Som.* 2.127; *Spec. Leg.* 2.62–64; *Prob.* 80–84; *Legat.* 156–57, 311–12; *Contempl.* 30–31.

[91] Philo *Legat.* 134–37. Cf. *t. Sukk.* 4:6 and the other rabbinic sources cited below.

[92] This appears to be the reason that it was remembered in rabbinic tradition; cf. *t. Sukk.* 4:6; *y. Sukk.* 5.55a–55b; *b. Sukk.* 51b. Contra Samuel Krauss, *Synagogale Altertümer* (Hildesheim [1922] 1966), 261–62, the immense size and wealth indicates that Philo and the rabbis must be referring to the same building. Two such buildings in Alexandria would be unlikely.

[93] Philo *Flacc* 74–77; Josephus *J.W.* 7.412–414; *Ant.* 14.116–17.

C. *Jewish Identity and Jewish Temples and Synagogues*

Durkheim has taught us that communal worship and other communal activities can often lend an aura of ultimate significance to the expression and reaffirmation of the social and ideological structures held to be important in any community.[94] Thus the ways in which pilgrimage to Jewish temples and synagogues functioned in the formulation of Jewish identity may represent some of the most distinctive factors in the construction of Jewish identity in Egypt.

(1) The temple in Jerusalem was an important symbolic center for many Jews. Some Jews reaffirmed their identity through pilgrimage to this temple. But even many of those who did not actually go to Jerusalem often credited the temple in Jerusalem with a distinctive role in their own understanding of Jewish identity. The value of this role was concretely affirmed through a variety of means, such as the payment of the yearly temple tax.[95]

(2) Geographical proximity allowed temples and synagogues in Egypt to play a more powerful and more immediate role in Jewish identity than the temple in Jerusalem. This was especially true in cases in which individuals held to ideologies that were intentionally hostile to the temple in Jerusalem. Jews often concretely affirmed their identification with local temples and synagogues through lavish gifts to build, beautify, and expand these structures.[96] Even people outside the Jewish community recognized the crucial role played by synagogues and Jewish temples in the formulation of Jewish identity. In the attack on the Jewish community in Alexandria in 38 CE, for example, one of the most distinctive modes of expressing hostility to Jews was the destruction and desecration of their meeting places.[97]

(3) Jewish temples and synagogues in Egypt took on features and

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[94] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York [1915] 1965).

[95] Cf. the discussion of the temple tax and other affirmations of the symbolic role of the Jerusalem temple above.

[96] E.g., *JIGRE* 9, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, *et al.*

[97] See Philo *Legatio* and *Flaccus* for the full account.

characteristics shared by non-Jewish temples in Egypt. This implies a collective willingness to transform the modes of expressing communal Jewish identity. This may have helped to create a social environment that would ultimately legitimize experimentation and diversity in redefining individual Jewish identity.

III. *Pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Dead*

A. *Introduction*

Pilgrimage to the tombs of the dead provides an important window into Jewish identity. Jewish pilgrimage to various tombs often typified broader structures of identity by which Jews both identified themselves with and distinguished themselves from their Hellenistic and Egyptian neighbors. But only a few tombs can with certainty be identified as major sites of Jewish pilgrimage in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. Jewish pilgrimage to these sites was primarily an extension of relationships of kinship and national identity. The connotations of pilgrimage to these tombs were therefore somewhat different from the connotations emphasized in pilgrimage to the same sites by Byzantine Christians.

B. *The Jewish Cult of the Dead in the Second Temple Period*

The proper place to begin a discussion of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors is with an analysis of the Jewish cult of the dead. Pilgrimages to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors in the Greco-Roman period were often designed to secure personal benefits in a way that suggests that such pilgrimage may have been an extension of traditional cult rituals by which Jews sought to maintain beneficial relationships with dead family members and ancestors. Evidence for ritual practices associated with the cult of the dead in the preexilic Israelite kingdoms is widespread.[98] The limited evidence for such practices in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods suggests that the scope of these practices had gradually become far more restricted in the centuries following the Babylonian exile.

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[98] Brian B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 11 (Tübingen 1994); Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead*, JSOTSup 123 (Sheffield 1992).

Frequent reiteration of biblical injunctions against necromancy and other cult activities associated with the dead did not entirely eliminate these activities from Second Temple Judaism.[99] But it did create a social climate that effectively discouraged such activities and increasingly identified them with Gentile practice.[100] Funerary deposits in Palestine include food, cooking pots, personal possessions, and occasionally a coin in the mouth to pay Charon's fare.[101] In some cases these articles were certainly intended as offerings.[102] But an increasing tendency to limit such offerings and provide them with new meaning can be observed throughout the Hellenistic and early Roman periods.[103] Pottery and other articles were often defective when deposited and seem to have been most commonly associated with burials of women and children.[104] In some cases the sole purpose of these deposits was to express the loss felt by the community.[105] Personal tombs of the elite were sometimes constructed at great expense.[106] But even tombs and ossuaries of wealthy individuals often demonstrate a commitment to an ideology of consciously abstaining from lavish expenditure on the dead.[107] Many individuals who shared this ideology believed that offerings and expenditure for the dead were quite simply a waste.[108]

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[99] *Sifre Deut* 172. Cf. below and Marvin H. Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 7C (Garden City, NY 1977), 210–229.

[100] *Jub.* 22:16–17; 11QTemple (11Q19) 60.16–20; CD (A) 12.2–3; *Jannes and Jambres*, Brit. Lib. Cotton Tiberius B.V. fol. 87. *Sifre Deut.* 172 and *Semachot* 8:1, 4 testify to the continuity of these ideas in the period at the very end of and subsequent to our period of investigation. In some circles in the third century CE the polemic against offerings to the dead in Deut. 26:14 was felt to be so irrelevant that it was given a new meaning; cf. *Sifre Deut.* 303; *m. Ma'as. Sh.* 5:12. Note that Dov Zlotnick, *The Tractate "Mourning" (Semahot): (Regulations Relating to Death, Burial, and Mourning)*, Yale Judaica Series 17 (New Haven 1966), 1–9, argues for a date near the end of the third century for *Semachot* based on the rabbinic authorities cited in the text. A similar date is implied in the archaeological evidence for ossilegium, which is mentioned in *Sem.* 12:1, 3–9. The earliest evidence for ossilegium dates from ca. 20 BCE and the practice began to disappear after the mid-third century CE; L.Y. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuraries in the Collections of the State of Israel* (Jerusalem 1994), 21–25.

[101] Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, Handbuch der Orientalistik 7,1.2B (Leiden 1988), 89–119; Rachel Hachlili and Ann Killebrew, "Jewish Funerary Customs During the Second Temple Period, in the Light of the Excavations at the Jericho Necropolis," *PEQ* 115 (1983):109–132 (with appendix, "The Jewish Population of Jericho 100 BC–70 AD," by B. Arensburg and P. Smith, 133–39); L.Y. Rahmani, "Ancient Jerusalem's Funerary Customs and Tombs," *BA* 44 (1981):171–77 (part 1); 44 (1981):229–35 (part 2); 45 (1981):43–53 (part 3); 45 (1982):109–119 (part 4); esp. part 3; Tob. 4:17.

[102] E.g., Tob 4:17. Less certain is the Roman grave altar used by a Jew in Cyrene in Cyrenaica, which may have functioned as an altar or simply a grave marker like a stele; Gert Lüderitz and Joyce M. Reynolds, *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika* (Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B, Nr. 53 (Wiesbaden 1983), pp. 29–31, no. 14.

[103] Cf. Rahmani, "Funerary Customs," part 1, 177.

[104] Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology*, 95, 97; Hachlili and Killebrew, "Jewish Funerary Customs," 116, 121. But note later in *Semachot* 8:7.

In the early Hellenistic period some Jews continued ritual activities at the tomb long after burial (Tob. 4:17). But Ben Sira and other Jews discouraged prolonging the period of ritual activities at the tomb because they believed that extending these rituals helped neither the living nor the dead (Sir. 30:18–20; 38:16–23; cf. 22:11–12). Beliefs like those of Ben Sira were often directly related to views of the afterlife. For Ben Sira, the dead could not help the living because the dead were "asleep" (Sir. 46:19–20; cf. 46:12; 49:10). "Sleep" ultimately became the common metaphor for death in Jewish inscriptions of the Roman period.[109] At the very least, it implied some kind of separation from normal life that varied in degree and kind based on the individual who used this metaphor.

Even in groups that took a different view of the afterlife there seems to have been an increasing tendency to limit the ritual activity at the tomb after burial or to channel funerary activities into circumscribed forms. Some Jews in Palestine avoided coming to the tomb after the burial because they did not want to give the appearance of engaging in pagan practices.[110] But this concern was probably rarely an issue. Probably a more common reason for staying away from tombs was a desire to avoid contracting a state of uncleanness.

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[105] *Semachot* 8:7, in this case a male in a text from a later period. The text provides a relevant analogy because the general practice of placing tools and other personal items in a burial is attested in earlier periods.

[106] E.g., 1 Macc. 13:25–30; Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology*, 103–110.

[107] Cf. Josephus *Ap.* 2.205; later, *Semachot* 8:2–7; 9:23. See Rahmani, *Catalogue,* 11–12; Rahmani, "Funerary Customs," part 1, 177; part 3, 50.

[108] Sir. 30:18–20; later, *Semachot* 8:2–7; 9:23; cf. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology*, 97; Rahmani, "Funerary Customs," part 1, 177.

[109] E.g., *JIGRE* 120; David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe* (2 vols; Cambridge 1993, 1995), 2, nos. 2, 9, 32, 101, *et al.* Cf. Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13.

[110] Cf. *Semachot* 8:1. Though this text only provides a late analogy, a general concern with appearances and setting a proper example was a traditional wisdom theme and hardly a new phenomenon; e.g., Sir. 38:17; 2 Cor. 8:21.

For many Jews even this concern was almost irrelevant. Uncleanness could be contracted through simple actions that placed many Jews in a continual state of uncleanness (e.g., Lev. 12:1–8; 15:1–33; Num. 19:11–13). But Nazirites, members of various sectarian groups, and other individuals were clearly interested in staying away from unnecessary contact with tombs after the burial so that they could avoid becoming unclean.[111] In cases in which the bones of the deceased were placed in an ossuary after a period of decomposition, the physical act of devotion associated with secondary burial was usually genuine.[112] But this activity was brief and not repeated. In some cases the process of secondary burial even seems to have been done rather carelessly.[113]

Identifiably Jewish burial practices in Egypt were similar to those in Palestine. Jewish burial practices in Egypt often followed Hellenistic models that identified the Jewish communities of Egypt firmly with other Hellenistic immigrant communities in Egypt. But the similarities between Jewish burial practices in Egypt and Jewish burial practices in Palestine provide a key archaeological determinant of Jewish identity that often helps to distinguish Jewish burials from other Hellenistic burials.

(1) Distinctive features of Jewish identity often appear in Jewish funerary art and architecture. The loculus structure was consistently used in the tombs of Jewish communities in Tell el-Yehoudieh and Alexandria.[114] This structure was also one of the standard patterns used in Jewish tombs in Palestine.[115] But the use of the loculus structure in Tell el-Yehoudieh and Alexandria does not clearly distinguish Jewish tombs from the tombs of other Hellenistic immigrant

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[111] Cf. Matt. 23:27; Luke 11:44; *m. Erub.* 1:7; *m. Naz.* 7:3; *m. Ohol.* 7:1; 15:8–9; 17:1–18:6; *Semachot* 4:6, 11–13, 17. "Sectarian groups" obviously includes emerging rabbinic Judaism in some of these cases. At Qumran, ritual purity was extended beyond degrees observed by most other Jews, partly through an extension of priestly requirements and an expansion of regulations that otherwise held significance only inside the temple; 11QTemple (11Q19) 48.10–14; 50.4–9; 4QMMT 61–77; CD(A) 12.1–2; cf. the emphasis on purity in 4QTohorot (4Q274–279); 4QOrdinances (4Q513–514); 1QM 7.1–8.

[112] *Semachot* 12:1, 3–5, 9. Cf. Eric M. Meyers, *Jewish Ossuaries: Reburial and Rebirth: Secondary Burials in their Ancient Near Eastern Setting*, BibOr 24 (Rome 1971).

[113] E.g., Rahmani, *Catalogue*, pp. 124 (no. 200), 132 (no. 228), 186 (no. 486).

[114] Naville, *Mound of the Jew*, 13; G. Botti, "Etudes Topographiques dans la Nécropole de Gabbari," *BSAA* 2 (1899):37–56, esp. 44.

[115] Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology*, 89–92; Hachlili and Killebrew, "Jewish Funerary Customs," 110–11.

communities in Egypt that used the same structure.[116] What is more distinctive to Jewish tombs at both sites is the consistent absence of figural paintings and reliefs.[117] A similar phenomenon can be observed in most of the Jewish tombs in Palestine until the efflorescence of Jewish figural art in the third century CE.[118] The decorative motifs that did appear in Jewish tombs in Tell el-Yehoudieh and Alexandria were typical of the motifs that were used in Palestine.[119] A preserved Jewish ossuary from Alexandria indicates that Jewish ossuary decoration in Alexandria also followed patterns identical to the patterns used on the ossuaries of Palestine.[120] The style and decoration of this ossuary indicates that it was either imported from Jerusalem not long before 70 CE or produced by a Jewish immigrant in Alexandria who had been trained in the distinctive traditions of ossuary design that had developed in the workshops of Jerusalem.[121] This vividly demonstrates that the close similarities between practices in Palestine and practices in Egypt were often nourished by direct influence from Palestine on the Jewish communities of Egypt.[122]

(2) The actual treatment given to the Jewish dead in some Egyptian Jewish communities was also consistent with Jewish practice in Palestine. Most Hellenistic communities in Egypt practiced both inhumation and cremation.[123] Jews in Egypt also might have occasionally practiced cremation.[124] But Jews in Alexandria and Tell el-Yehoudieh

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[116] Ibrahim Noshy, *The Arts in Ptolemaic Egypt: A Study of Greek and Egyptian Influences in Ptolemaic Architecture and Sculpture* (London 1937), 16–47; Botti, "Etudes Topographiques," 37–56.

[117] E.g., Botti, "Etudes Topographiques," 44. Contrast Noshy, *Arts*, 16–47; Blanche R. Brown, *Ptolemaic Paintings and Mosaics and the Alexandrian Style*, Monographs on Archaeology and Fine Arts 6 (Cambridge 1957), 4–52; Botti, "Etudes Topographiques," 37–56.

[118] Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology*, 1–2, 65–83, 89–119.

[119] E.g., grape motif in Griffiths, *Antiquities*, 53, plate 3; cf. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology*, 104–106, figs. IV 8, 9.

[120] The Alexandrian ossuary is in Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, Bollingen Series 37 (13 vols; Princeton 1953–1968), 2.62 (cf. vol. 3, fig. 113); Charles Clermont-Ganneau, "Ossuaire Juif Provenant d'Alexandrie," *RArch* 26 ser. 2 (1873):302–305. Compare this with Rahmani, *Catalogue*, plates (*passim*).

[121] Rahmani, *Catalogue*, 21–25, esp. 25, who suggests that it was imported from Jerusalem.

[122] Cf. Tcherikover, *CPJ* 1, pp. 44–47 on the growth of influence from Palestine on Jews in Egypt in the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods.

[123] E.g., Botti, "Etudes Topographiques," 37–56; Evaristo Breccia, *Le Musée Gréco-Romain 1925–1931* (Bergamo 1932), 14–27.

[124] For a possible allusion to cremation, see Ps.-Phocylides 97.

typically practiced inhumation.[125] In this respect they shared the practice of other Jewish communities in Palestine and the Diaspora.[126] Evidence from Tell el-Yehoudieh suggests that the practice of limiting grave goods to a minimum is another pattern that Jews in Egypt shared with Jews in Palestine.[127] This contrasts sharply with the numerous amulets, offerings, and personal objects typically placed in Egyptian burials.[128] The ossuary from Alexandria mentioned above demonstrates that in the early Roman period secondary burial in ossuaries was practiced in Alexandria just as it was in Palestine.[129]

(3) Funerary stelae once again demonstrate a pattern of conscious selectivity in the adoption of Hellenistic practice. The physical forms of Hellenistic funerary stelae used in Egypt are modeled on classical Greek prototypes traditionally utilized in the cult of the dead.[130] Jewish funerary stelae in Egypt are so similar in form to the funerary stelae of their Hellenistic neighbors that in some cases they must have been produced in the same workshops.[131] The inscriptions placed on Jewish funerary stelae also sometimes follow standard literary

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[125] E.g., Naville, *Mound of the Jew*, 13; Griffiths, *Antiquities*, 51–53; Shehata Adam, "Recent Discoveries in the Eastern Delta (Dec. 1950–May 1955)," *ASAE* 55 (1958): 301–324, esp. 314; Breccia, *Musée Gréco-Romain 1925–1931*, 21–24.

[126] E.g., the Jewish community in Rome; Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, Morris Loeb Series 5 (Philadelphia 1960), 54–66. For Palestine, see above and note possible exceptions in *Semachot* 14:2.

[127] Naville, *Mound of the Jew*, 13, 15; Shehata Adam, "Recent Discoveries in the Eastern Delta (Dec. 1950–May 1955)," *ASAE* 55 (1958):301–324, esp. 314. Cf. Rahmani, "Funerary Customs," part 1, 177; part 3, 50.

[128] Françoise Dunand, "Pratiques et croyances funéraires en Égypte romaine," *ANRW* II.18.5 (1995):3216–3315, esp. 3287–3304.

[129] Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 2.62 (cf. vol. 3, fig. 113); Clermont-Ganneau, "Ossuaire Juif Provenant d'Alexandrie," 302–305. Another possible example is the ossuary of "Nicanor the Alexandrian" (*JIGRE* 153; cf. *m. Yoma* 3:10). But this may have been made in Jerusalem where it was found. Cf. Isaiah Gafni, "Reinterment in the Land of Israel: Notes on the Origin and Development of the Custom," *Jerusalem Cathedra: Studies in the History, Archaeology, Geography and Ethnography of the Land of Israel*, ed. Lee I. Levine (Jerusalem 1981), 1.96–104.

[130] Evaristo Breccia, *La Necropoli di Sciatbi*, Catalogue Général des Antiquités Egyptiennes 63–64 (2 vols; Le Caire 1912), vol. 2, plates 6, 7, 16, 17, 18, 32; Evaristo Breccia, "La Necropoli de l'Ibrahimieh," *BSAA* 9 (1907):35–86. Cf. Donna Carol Kurtz, *Athenian White Lekythoi: Patterns and Painters* (Oxford 1975), plates 20.1, 2; 22.1, 2b; 23.3; 26.1; 28.2; 29.4; 30.2; 31.29; 33.1–3; 36.2; 46.3; 48.3; 49.1; 50.1b. Cf. the Roman grave altar used by a Jew in Cyrenaika; Lüderitz and Reynolds, *CJZC*, no. 14, pp. 29–31.

[131] Jewish stelae in R. Mesnil du Buisson, "Compte Rendu Sommaire d'une Mission à Tell el-Yahoudiyé," *BIFAO* 29 (1929):155–78, esp. 156 (= JIGRE 97). Cf. the non-Jewish examples in Brown, *Ptolemaic Paintings*, 4–52; Breccia, "Necropoli de l'Ibrahimieh," 35–86.

patterns found on other Hellenistic inscriptions in Egypt.[132] In a few cases this even includes references to the Greco-Roman mythology of the underworld.[133] But references to whole hosts of Greco-Roman deities do not appear on recognizably Jewish funerary stelae as they sometimes do on non-Jewish examples.[134] Jewish funerary stelae, like Jewish tombs, also consistently avoid the figural representations that frequently appear on other Hellenistic stelae. This suggests conscious restraint in the adoption of Hellenistic cult practice in favor of retaining certain markers of cultural identity shared with Jews in Palestine.

The previous examples illustrate what might be called "selective Hellenization." Individual Jews obviously must have varied widely in those aspects of Hellenistic funerary practice that they accepted or rejected. Some Jews, of course, must have adopted Hellenistic funerary practice to such a degree that these Jews can no longer be distinguished from Gentiles in the archaeological record. But many Jews in Egypt did not unreservedly adopt practices associated with Hellenistic modes of honoring, feeding, and consulting the dead.

Jewish adoption of Egyptian funerary practice is more difficult to document than Jewish adoption of Hellenistic funerary practice. Probably in settings such as Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu), where the Jewish community was highly assimilated to the Egyptian culture around it, Egyptian funerary practice was standard procedure in the Jewish community.[135] Some Jews in other locations also surely must have followed the example of the numerous Greek and Roman immigrants to Egypt who appropriated Egyptian funerary ideology and practice.[136] But in the very act of adopting Egyptian practices and ideas these Jews often rendered themselves indistinguishable in the archaeological record from non-Jews who shared Egyptian practices and ideas. Thus Tcherikover was perhaps too confident in using the adoption of Egyptian funerary practices as a basis for denying originally Jewish identity to certain persons who had the Hebrew derivative name "Sambathion."[137] For example, the typical Egyptian mythological motifs that decorate the mummy of a Fayum woman from the mid-first century named "Sambathion" are insufficient grounds for denying that the woman was Jewish.[138] The name alone is, however, also insufficient grounds for affirming her Jewish identity. One simply cannot know whether such an individual was Jewish or not without more details about the context from which the mummy came. The ambiguities that result from examples like this make it difficult to find certain evidence for Jewish adoption of Egyptian funerary cult practice.

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[132] E.g., cf. the exhortations to weep in *JIGRE* 31, 40, 99, 101, *et al.* and in Etienne Bernand, *Inscriptions Métriques de L'Égypte Gréco-Romaine: Recherches sur la Poésie Épigrammatique des Grecs en Égypte*, Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon 98 (Paris 1969), nos. 82, 96. Cf. also the dialogue epitaph in *JIGRE* 38 and Bernand, *Inscriptions Métriques*, nos. 23, 47, 49, 68. Cf. David Noy, "The Jewish Communities of Leontopolis and Venosa," *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Pieter Willem van der Horst, AGJU 21 (Leiden 1994), 162–82.

[133] *JIGRE* 31, 34, 38, 39; no. 33 refers to fate.

[134] Cf. pagan stelae in Bernand, *Inscriptions Métriques*, nos. 46, 76.

[135] On Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu), see the discussion near the end of this study (below).

[136] E.g., early Ptolemaic burials in the Alexandrian cemeteries employ cremation and inhumation in traditional Greek fashion; Evaristo Breccia, *Necropoli di Sciatbi*, 1.vii–viii; Breccia, *Musée Gréco-Romain 1925–1931*, 23; Evaristo Breccia, *Le Musée Gréco-Romain d'Alexandrie 2 (1931–1932)* ([Bergamo 1933] Roma 1978), 18–19. In contrast, late Ptolemaic and early Roman burials in Alexandria show increasing use of

Funerary inscriptions of known Jewish origin from Egypt typically include calls to "weep" and lamentation over the sorrow of family members.[139] This indicates that the inscriptions are primarily the epiphenomena of mourning. Only a few Jewish inscriptions from Egypt offer or request a short verbal blessing.[140] No certainly Jewish inscriptions have yet been found in Egypt that request the more

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mummification and a clear Egyptianizing trend; Breccia, *Musée Gréco-Romain 1925–1931*, 26, 33; Breccia, *Musée Gréco-Romain d'Alexandrie 2*, 10; Marjorie Susan Vent, "The Painted Tomb from Wardian and the Decoration of Alexandrian Tombs," *JARCE* 25 (1988):71–91; cf. Strabo 17.1.10 C795. The same is true in the chora; Dominic Montserrat, "The Representation of Young Males in 'Fayum Portraits'," *JEA* 79 (1993):215–25. Against Lorelei Corcoran, "Evidence for the Survival of Pharaonic Religion in Roman Egypt: The Mummy Portrait," *ANRW* II.18.5 (1995):3316–32, note that the clavus (purple stripe) of the Roman equestrian rank appears on mummy portraits of the first century in Klaus Parlasca, *Ritratti di Mummie* (*Repertorio d'Arte dell'Egitto Greco-Romano, Serie B, Vols. 1–3*), ed. Achille Adriani (Roma 1969–1980), vol. 1, females, nos. 1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17 (with Egyptian themes), 18 (with Egyptian themes), 20, 23, 36, 38, 72, 74, 75, 76, 79, 80, 85; and males, nos. 31, 33, 34, 41, 46, 48, 49, 52, 54 (end of 1st or beginning of 2nd century), 64, 78 (small child). The clavus and the balteus (weapon belt) appear together on the males in vol. 1, nos. 169, 177, 179, 202 (all from the reign of Hadrian), indicating that the individuals are military officers.

[137] Tcherikover, *CPJ* 3, pp. 43–56. So also Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 359–61. Note the Jewish genealogies that include Sambathions in *CPJ* 2, pp. 116–18.

[138] C.C. Edgar, *Graeco-Egyptian Coffins: Masks and Portraits*, Catalogue Général des Antiquités Egyptiennes du Musée du Caire nos. 33101–33285 (Le Caire 1905), pp. 13–15, no. 33126, pl. VII (from Hawara in the Fayum).

[139] E.g., *JIGRE* 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 64, 74, 83, 97, 99, 101, 102.

[140] *JIGRE* 38, 39, 109. The words used for setting up the stele in one example are used elsewhere for setting up dedicatory monuments to deities but hardly imply a cult in this case; *JIGRE* 78 and p. 150 notes. In the context of Philo, the unique

elaborate rites implied or solicited on Egyptian funerary monuments.[141] Some Jews in Egypt did practice mummification.[142] But it is not well attested in identifiably Jewish burials. Intentional burial of the dead under houses and ritual use of mummy portraits or Roman images of the dead are discussed in some Jewish sources.[143] But these sources make no real attempt to polemicize against the Jewish adoption of these practices. It is difficult to determine whether such a polemic was simply neglected in the sources available or whether polemic against the Jewish adoption of these practices was usually not needed in the Jewish communities in which the sources were produced.

In sum, sources that can with certainty be identified with Jews suggest that Jewish cult practices associated with the dead were comparatively limited in their expression throughout our period. The social and ritual patterns associated with dead family members that had been so common in the preexilic period seem to have undergone a serious attenuation throughout the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. This in turn had a direct impact on the development of traditions of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors.

C. *Pilgrimage to the Tombs of Jewish Heroes and Ancestors*

1. *The Context of Pilgrimage to the Tombs of Heroes and Ancestors*

The conclusion reached in the previous section of our discussion suggests that pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors could only experience a rather stunted growth during the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. The limited scope of the social patterns

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reference to the duty of εὐφημία for the dead in Philo *Post.* 181 probably implies simple "respect" rather than "ritual silence."

[141] On Egyptian rites, see M. Smith, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum 3: The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507* (London 1987), 19–28. For examples, see Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3.13–65.

[142] *JIGRE* 133 and notes on pp. 223–25; *CPJ* 3, p. 43.

[143] Wis. 14:15–16. In Palestine, see 11QTemple (11Q19) 48.10–14; *Mek. Pischa* 13 on Exod. 12:30. See more generally, *Semachot* 8:1. Cf. Montserrat, "Fayum Portraits," 215–25; David L. Thompson, "A Painted Triptych from Roman Egypt," *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 6–7 (1978–79):185–92. See also Lorelei Corcoran, "A Cult Function for the So-called Faiyum Mummy Portraits?" *Life in a Multi-cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, ed. Janet H. Johnson, SAOC 51 (Chicago 1992), 57–61, although Corcoran fails to convince on all points because of the way that she uses evidence from mummies to explain use of portraits prior to incorporation in the mummy. Egyptian burial under houses might have occurred but was not the normal practice; cf. Dunand, "Pratiques," 3216–3315.

associated with the cult of the dead in the Second Temple period severely weakened the infrastructure needed for the growth of traditions of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors. Jews who made pilgrimages to the tombs of such figures were making pilgrimages to the tombs of other Jews. Pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors was therefore inextricably bound up with relationships of kinship. As Marcel Simon has observed, pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors may be understood as an extension of the kinship relationships expressed in the cult of the dead.[144] The relative attenuation of the cult of the dead throughout most of the Second Temple period undercut one of the major potential sources of interest in the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors at the grassroots level.

The close relationship between the scope of the cult of the dead and the growth of traditions of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors will be confirmed in this section by analysis of the evidence for pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors. The conclusion that will be reached in this section is that the few traditions of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors that did function on a national scale during the Second Temple period remained rather inchoate and embryonic in their development until sometime after the Bar Kochba revolt. During the Hellenistic and early Roman periods these traditions were dominated by the ideology of kinship relationships and national identity. The growth and proliferation of traditions of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors in later periods was nourished by an infrastructure of ideology and practice that did not clearly emerge until the third century CE.

Biblical and early post-biblical sources suggest a number of possible motivations for pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods.

(1) First, a long Jewish tradition of engaging in rituals to affirm one's personal identification with Jewish historical memory was integral to the major Jewish festivals.[145] Simple historical motivations such as a desire to affirm one's continuity with one's heritage may have motivated pilgrimage to the tombs of ancestors and heroes.

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[144] Marcel Simon, "Les Saints d'Israël dans la dévotion de l'Eglise Ancienne," *RHPR* 34 (1954):98–127, esp. 107.

[145] E.g., Exod. 12:14–27; 23:14–15; Lev. 23:39–43; Deut. 16:1–3; Ezekiel Trag. *Exagoge* 167–171 in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.12; *m. Pesach.* 9:4–5.

(2) Second, the merits of the righteous dead were often attributed with a supererogatory value.[146] Some individuals may have believed that a residue of this merit inhered like a magical power in the dead person's remains.[147] They may have concluded that supernatural blessing could be obtained most effectively through physical proximity to these remains.

(3) Third, the righteous dead were often credited with powers of intercession on behalf of the living.[148] Some individuals may have believed that the soul of the dead was localized in the body's physical remains or in the tomb.[149] They may have believed that pilgrimage to the tomb would assist them in gaining the attention of the dead so that the dead would intercede on their behalf.

These motivations were often negated by opposing tendencies, however.

(1) Jews who emphasized personal responsibility often minimized the efficacy of the merits of the ancestors.[150]
(2) Many Jews held views of the afterlife that precluded or limited the intercessory activity of the dead.[151]
(3) Many Jews did not expect much help from the dead because they believed that the dead themselves required intercession on their behalf by the living.[152]
(4) Jews typically discussed the merits and intercession of the ancestors as if the benefits derived from the ancestors were effective regardless of one's location or any personal effort to secure these benefits.[153]

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[146] Ps. Philo *LAB* 18:5; 35:3; 2 Macc. 7:37–38; 4 Macc. 17:21–22; Josephus *Ant.* 11.169; *Mek. Pischa* 1 to Exod. 12:1; *Mek. Pischa* 16 to Exod. 13:4; *Sifre Deut.* 26, 38. Cf. Gen. 30:27; 39:5; Josephus *Ant.* 8.278.

[147] Cf. the bones of Elisha in 2 Kgs 13:20–21; the bones of Joseph in *Mek. Beshallah* 4 on Exod. 14:15. Note, however, that neither of these texts are from the Second Temple period.

[148] 2 Macc. 15:12–16; Bar 3:4; *Apoc. Zeph.* 11:1–6; cf. *1 Enoch* 22:5–7; Rev. 6:9–10.

[149] For a tomb as a "house" see Meyers, *Jewish Ossuaries*, 17–21; and the clear imitation of features of house architecture in loculi tombs (e.g., false doors). Cf. Isa. 14:18; probably 1 Sam. 25:1; 1 Kgs 2:34; Qoh. 12:5; *Jub.* 36:1. For a spirit associated with its bones, see *Sifre Deut* 172.

[150] Cf. Ps. Philo *LAB* 3:10; 33:5; *4 Ezra* 7:102–115 (45); *T. Moses* 11:16–12:11.

[151] Ps. Philo *LAB* 33:5; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 85:12; *4 Ezra* 7:102–115 (45).

[152] 2 Macc. 12:40–45; *T. Abr.* 14:1–15 (A); *Sifre Deut* 210; *Semachot* 10:2. Cf. the helplessness of the dead (discussed further below) implied in Tob. 1:17–19; 2:1–9, 14; 4:16–17.

[153] Ps. Philo *LAB* 18:5; 35:3; Josephus *Ant.* 11.169; Bar. 3:4; *Apoc. Zeph.* 11:1–6;

(5) Many Jews believed that upon death the soul fled to spiritual regions far removed from the tomb.[154] For some Jews this probably did not present any obstacle at all in their quest to make contact with the dead. They may have had other reasons for believing that efforts to secure blessings from the dead would still be effective at the tomb. But other Jews may have felt that the souls of the dead were so far removed from the tomb and the concerns of this life that contact with the dead at the tomb was not even possible.

(6) The same factors that prevented many Jews from engaging in pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem hindered the growth of traditions of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors in Palestine. Most Jews who lived at a great geographical distance from Palestine simply could not go to these tombs. Unlike pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem, no commandment required pilgrimage to the tombs of the ancestors. Thus the costs of travel and other obstacles that made it difficult for Jews in the Diaspora to go to the temple weighed even more heavily against any desire that they had to make a pilgrimage to the tombs of the ancestors.

2. *Evaluating the Evidence for Pilgrimage to the Tombs of Heroes and Ancestors*

Factors such as those described in the previous section guaranteed that patterns of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors would develop in a variety of directions with widely varying degrees of success. Because of the dynamics that occasionally opposed the growth of these patterns of pilgrimage, the evidence for Jewish pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors in Palestine during the Second Temple Period is far less extensive than is often believed. Modern discussions of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors in the Second Temple period have too often relied on sources that are from later periods or that do not explicitly refer to pilgrimage at all.[155] The selection of sources for the study of this topic requires that at least three points be taken into consideration.

Mek. Pischa 1 to Exod. 12:1; *Mek. Pischa* 16 to Exod. 13:4; *Sifre Deut* 26, 38; cf. Rev. 6:9–10.

[154] *1 Enoch* 22:1–14; 4 Macc. 17:18–19; *JIGRE* 33, 38, 39; Luke 16:22–31; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:6–8.

[155] E.g., Joachim Jeremias, *Heilengräber in Jesu Umwelt (Mt. 23, 29; Lk. 11, 47): Eine Untersuchung zur Volksreligion der Zeit Jesu* (Göttingen 1958), who often relies on sources produced in the Byzantine period and later, many of which are Christian

(1) First, rabbinic sources cannot be used without serious qualification because these sources represent a stage of development that included a number of innovations that played little or no role in sources from periods before the growth of rabbinic Judaism. The destruction of the temple in 70 CE and the exclusion of Jews from Jerusalem in 135 CE released a wealth of ritual and economic resources that had previously been directed toward the temple in Jerusalem. This provided a fresh impetus for the growth and diversification of local pilgrimage traditions. The rabbinic movement itself contributed to the new interest in the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors by promoting a new class of holy persons whose presence carried special power and influence.[156] Beginning in the middle of the third century CE it became increasingly common to attribute charismatic powers to the members of this class.[157] The preference of many of the members of the rabbinic class for being buried near one another suggests a conscious effort to maintain after death the structure, purity, and power of the relationships that they had experienced before death.[158] The possibility that others sought to obtain personal benefit from this power by visiting the tombs of the sages is suggested by the benches for gatherings at catacomb 14 of the rabbinic cemetery of Beth She'arim.[159] The growing ideology of pilgrimage to the tombs of the sages may have spilled over onto traditions associated with older Jewish heroes and ancestors because these figures were often posthumously appropriated by rabbinic tradition.[160] This may have provided a new motivation for pilgrimage to the purported burial sites of figures whose tombs may have attracted little or no attention at all in earlier periods. The growth of Christian pilgrimage

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or produced under Christian influence; e.g., the *Lives of the Prophets* (see below). For a recent example, see John Wilkinson, "Visits to Jewish Tombs by Early Christians," *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn, 22.–28. September 1991*, ed. Ernst Dassmann and Josef Engemann, JAC Ergänzungsband 20, 1–2 (Münster 1995), 1.452–65, who indiscriminately uses Talmudic sources, late Byzantine Christian sources, and Second Temple sources.

[156] E.g., *m. Sotah* 9:9–15; *b. Sab.* 119b. Cf. Levine, *Rabbinic Class*, 105–109.

[157] William Scott Green, "Palestinian Holy Men: Charismatic Leadership and Rabbinic Traditions," *ANRW* II.19.2 (1979):619–47, esp. 624–26, 646.

[158] E.g., note the elaborate rabbinic cemetery at Beth She'arim; cf. Levine, *Rabbinic Class*, 64–65.

[159] Cohen, "Pagan and Christian Evidence on the Ancient Synagogue," 168–69.

[160] Cf. the discussion of the appropriation of figures from earlier generations in Levine, *Rabbinic Class*, 105–109, referring to the posthumous transformation of Honi the rainmaker into a paradigm for rabbinic ideology. See especially Green, "Palestinian Holy Men," 619–47. The appropriation of earlier figures was endemic to the attempt to retroject rabbinic tradition back into earlier generations (cf. *m. Avoth* 1:1).

traditions in the Byzantine period probably also contributed to the growth of Jewish pilgrimage traditions.[161] The result of these and other factors was an intensification of interest in the tombs of Jewish heroes in the third and fourth centuries CE.[162] From the third century onward this interest even included a sort of posthumous pilgrimage to Palestine in which reburial next to sages and religious specialists was especially favored.[163]

The chronology of these developments cannot be ignored. Rabbinic references to the tombs of various biblical and post-biblical figures should in most cases be treated as the epiphenomena of the time of their production unless specific testimony from earlier sources provides evidence of interest in these tombs in earlier periods. Traditions of pilgrimage to various tombs mentioned in sources after the Second Temple period often may have had no precedent at all in the Second Temple period itself.

(2) Second, Byzantine Christian sources must be used with much greater caution than is often applied in discussions of the possible Jewish origins of these traditions. Joan Taylor has emphasized that it is dangerous to assume that the mere existence of an early Christian tradition associated with a particular location is sufficient evidence of the Jewish origin of this tradition.[164] Taylor has reminded us that Christians often created entirely new pilgrimage traditions by reinterpreting local pagan traditions, claiming to recover "lost" traditions from tenuous Jewish sources, and applying the biblical text to the interpretation of environmental phenomena, local tombs, and various structures whose true significance was unknown.[165]

The magnitude of the error that can result from ignoring the possibility that a specific tradition is a Christian invention is most vividly demonstrated in the case of the *Lives of the Prophets*. The *Lives* is one of the sources most consistently used in discussions of Jewish pilgrimage to various tombs in the first century CE.[166] But David Satran has convincingly argued that the *Lives* is a Christian composition of the fourth or fifth century CE.[167] Indisputably Jewish evidence for pre-Christian pilgrimage to many of the tombs mentioned in the *Lives* is entirely lacking.[168] Excluding the *Lives* from the corpus of evidence for pilgrimage traditions in the first century results in a considerable reduction in the number of tombs that can with certainty be identified as sites of Jewish pilgrimage in the first century. This requires a reevaluation of the importance of pilgrimage to the tombs of prophets and other charismatic figures in the Second Temple period. Pilgrimage to the tombs of major ancestors and kings, for example, may have been more typical of Jewish pilgrimage in the Second Temple period than the occasional interest shown in the tombs of martyrs, prophets, and charismatic heroes.[169]

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[161] Correctly, Simon, "Saints d'Israël," 113–27.

[162] Cf. Cohen, "Pagan and Christian Evidence on the Ancient Synagogue," 168–69; Gafni, "Reinterment in the Land of Israel," 102–104. Cf. below.

[163] Gafni, "Reinterment in the Land of Israel," 96–104. This practice was not popular before the third century.

[164] Joan E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford 1993).

[165] This point was earlier emphasized by Simon, "Saints d'Israël," 113–27.

[166] Jeremias, *Heilengräber*, is dependent on the *Lives* throughout. Similarly Wilkinson, "Visits to Jewish Tombs by Early Christians," 1.452–65.

(3) The third and final consideration that must be taken into account in the selection of sources for the study of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods is that one simply cannot assume that a reference to a tomb in a Jewish source from these periods is itself evidence of a pilgrimage tradition. Knowledge of the location of a tomb can be sustained by persons who just happen to live nearby or who pass by the tomb during the normal course of life. Descriptive references about the location of various tombs therefore do not in themselves justify elaborate reconstructions of traditions of pilgrimage to these tombs.

This applies even in cases in which a tomb is mentioned in the context of a highly developed martyrology. Important martyrological traditions certainly did arise during the Second Temple period as a result of the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.[170] But developed martyrologies do not in themselves necessarily imply an interest in the actual tombs or physical remains of the martyrs.[171] In general the evidence for Jewish pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish martyrs is extremely scarce before the Bar Kochba revolt.

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[167] David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine: Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets*, SVTP 11 (Leiden 1995).

[168] E.g., see below on the tomb of Jeremiah.

[169] Tombs and shrines of prophets may still have been known, of course; cf. Matt. 23:29–30; Luke 11:47. For a possible shrine of Jeremiah in Jerusalem, see *4 Baruch* (*Paraleipomena Jeremiou*), 9:11–32. But the book may date to the reign of Hadrian and even after the Bar Kochba revolt, when Jewish interest in the tombs of martyrs and heroes seems to have increased; cf. Robert A. Kraft and Ann-Elizabeth Purintun, *Paraleipomena Jeremiou*, SBLTT 1, Pseudepigrapha 1 (Missoula, MT 1972), 7–10. In addition, this section of the book was heavily reworked by Christian redactors and may not be based on any Jewish tradition at all. *Semachot* 14:10 refers to the "tombs of Huldah," but the plural calls into question the common assumption that this refers to the prophetess of that name. The text is also rather late for our purposes and may reflect a tradition that had not yet developed in our period of interest.

[170] Exemplified in 2 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, Daniel, and other texts; see the essays in J.W. van Henten, ed., *Die Enstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie*, SPB 38 (Leiden 1989).

For example, the entire book of 4 Maccabees is focused on the deaths of the martyrs of the Maccabean era. Recent scholarship has pointed out that no solid evidence can be adduced in favor of the once popular notion that 4 Maccabees was a sermon delivered at the tomb of the martyrs.[172] The author's interest in the martyrs is strictly pedagogical. They are cited only as examples of the power of philosophical reason over the emotions.[173] Nothing in the text implies that any supernatural benefit would be made available by the martyrs to individuals who visited their tomb. The author indicates that the martyrs obtained the reward of immortality.[174] But the author does not say anything about any ongoing service performed by the martyrs on behalf of the living after the martyrs had died and entered the immortal state. The author emphasizes that the very act in which the martyrs experienced death was itself the means by which blessing was brought to the nation.[175] The author implies that the propitiatory value of the deaths of the martyrs would benefit the nation because God was just and merciful, not because anyone visited their tomb.[176] The author's only stated interest in their tomb was in the value that it could have as an instructive "memorial" for the people of "the nation."[177] It is only after 4 Maccabees had become an object of Christian interpretation that can one find certain evidence for a developed cult associated with the purported tomb of the Maccabean martyrs.[178]

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[171] As correctly observed by Jack N. Lightstone, *The Commerce of the Sacred: Mediation of the Divine among Jews in the Greco-Roman Diaspora*, BJS 59 (Chico, CA 1984), 76.

[172] E.g., Jan Willem van Henten, "A Jewish Epitaph in a Literary Text: 4 Macc. 17:8–10," *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Pieter Willem van der Horst, AGJU 21 (Leiden 1994), 44–69, esp. 47; H. Anderson, "4 Maccabees," *OTP* 2.533–37.

[173] E.g., 4 Macc. 1:1–3:19; 5:35–38; 6:7, 10–11, 17–22, 31–35, *et passim* in 4 Maccabees.

[174] E.g., 4 Macc. 9:8, 22; 16:25; 17:12; 18:3, 14–19, 23.

[175] E.g., 4 Macc. 1:11; 6:28–29; 9:24; 11:3; 12:15–17; 17:10, 21–22; 18:3–4.

[176] E.g., 4 Macc. 1:11; 6:28–29; 9:24; 11:3; 12:15–17; 17:10, 21–22; 18:4, 22; cf. 2 Macc. 6:12–7:38.

[177] 4 Macc. 17:8–10.

[178] Cf. Willy Rordorf, "Wie Steht es um den jüdischen Einfluss auf den christlichen Märtyrerkult?" *Juden und Christen in der Antike*, ed. J. van Amersfoort und J. van

3. *Pilgrimage to the Tombs of Jewish Heroes and Ancestors in Palestine*

In some cases pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors clearly did occur. Even minor figures who are only briefly mentioned in the Bible, such as the daughter of Jephthah, sometimes played important roles in local tradition and ritual (Ps.-Philo *LAB* 40:8–9). But interest seems to have been directed most frequently toward the tombs of patriarchs, matriarchs, and kings. The tombs of Abraham and Sarah, the twelve patriarchs, David, Solomon, and other similar figures seem to have been among the few tombs that were associated with known locations in the Second Temple period.[179] Some of these sites may have been known because of persistent traditions of pilgrimage that kept alive the memory of their location. The role of major ancestors and kings in Second Temple pilgrimage traditions indicates that one of the primary reasons for pilgrimage to the tombs of the dead was to reaffirm and express relationships of kinship and national identity.

The outstanding example of this is the shrine of Machpelah at Hebron. The enclosure wall built by Herod the Great to surround the tombs of the patriarchs was strikingly similar in proportion, plan, and construction to the wall that he built to enclose the temple mount.[180] Jack Lightstone has observed that this indicates that the shrine at Machpelah had a role for contact with the sacred similar in ideological function and in national scope to the temple in Jerusalem.[181] This implies that Jews believed that the patriarchs and matriarchs buried in Machpelah could still somehow render powerful assistance to their descendants. The importance of these ancestors in *Jubilees*, the *Testament of the 12 Patriarchs*, and other Second Temple literature implies that these figures played a powerful role in the Jewish mythology of this period. No other Jewish tombs in the Second Temple period seem to have attracted anywhere near the amount of attention as the tombs at Machpelah. The central role of kinship and national identity in Jewish pilgrimage to the tombs of heroes

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Oort (Kampen 1990), 61–71; Margaret A. Schatkin, "The Maccabean Martyrs," *VC* 28 (1974):97–113.

[179] Cf. Josephus *J.W.* 1.61; 4.531–33; *Ant.* 5.118–19; 7.392–94; 11.165; 13.249; 16.179–87; Cassius Dio *Hist. Rom.* 69.14.2; *Mek. Amalek* 2 to Exod. 17:14 (Deut. 34:1); Acts 2:29; *T. Sim.* 8:2; *T. Jud.* 26:4; *T. Ben.* 12:1–3; *Jub.* 46:9–10. For a later example, see *Semachot* 14:10.

[180] Nancy Miller, "Patriarchal Burial Site Explored for First Time in 700 Years," *BARev* 11/3 (May/June 1985), 26–43.

[181] Lightstone, *Commerce of the Sacred*, 71–73. Cf. Josephus *J.W.* 4.531–33.

and ancestors is most vividly demonstrated in the unrivaled importance attributed to these tombs.

This presents an important contrast with the Christian cult of the saints. Peter Brown has noted that in the cult of the saints Christian claims of ideological kinship often conflicted directly with and superseded the claims of close biological kinship.[182] Social relationships that existed among living Christians were thus often projected into the realm of the dead. Christians who sought benefits from dead saints extended to these dead saints many of the same expectations that they directed toward living individuals who had charismatic powers. In contrast, the benefits that Jews expected to receive from dead ancestors were based on an extension of the social obligations that operated along kinship lines between older and younger generations among the living. Jews expected blessings from their ancestors just as any child expected to receive assistance from his or her parents and grandparents. Pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors was therefore inspired by a conviction that elders had social obligations toward children that continued even after death.[183]

Children also had social obligations to elders. Thus in some cases actions on behalf of the dead were undertaken to fulfill the obligations that living Jews owed to their ancestors. The framework for understanding these actions is essentially the same as that of the social obligation of each Jew to care for his or her aged parents and for orphans, widows, the poor, and other members of Jewish society who could not help themselves. Like actions undertaken on behalf of these individuals, actions on behalf of the dead were considered meritorious deeds that would be rewarded by God.[184] Jews who demonstrated concern for the dead and their tombs therefore did not always do so to derive benefit directly from the dead.

In Tobit, for example, the direction of the flow of assistance and blessing is from the living to the dead. This is exactly the opposite of the primary direction in which blessing moves in the later Christian cult of the saints. The author of Tobit consistently placed concern for the burial and feeding of the dead in the same category as feeding and clothing the poor (Tob. 1:17–19; 2:1–9, 14; 4:16–17). Tobit's admonition to give food to the righteous dead and withhold it from the wicked dead has far more in common with the discipline of naughty children than it does with Christian efforts to secure blessings from powerful martyrs and other dead saints (Tob. 4:16–17). Since the dead could not repay him, Tobit believed that his reward would have to come from God (Tob. 3:1–6, 16; 4:5–11). The author of Tobit thus believed that the living should serve the dead because the dead are in need of help from the living. For the author of Tobit, visiting the tombs of the dead was simply an extension of the common notion that giving assistance to helpless members of society was a meritorious deed that would be rewarded by God. Fulfillment of social obligations toward the dead therefore did not imply that the dead were able to extend any help to the living.

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[182] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Haskell Lectures on History of Religion, n.s. 2 (Chicago 1981), 23–49.

[183] In a slightly different sense, cf. Luke 16:24–30, where the rich man expects help from Abraham because Abraham is his "father" and he is Abraham's "child."

[184] See below; cf. much later the misguided zeal for the dead thought to be meritorious but rebuked in *Semachot* 4:19.

The network of social obligations associated with Jewish communal life also provides the proper context for understanding the actions of Jews who "built the tombs of the prophets and restored the graves of the righteous" (Matt. 23:29; cf. Luke 11:47). Nothing in either Matthew or Luke even hints that anyone engaged in such activities to win any kind of favor from the dead. The contexts in which these activities were mentioned in Matthew and Luke contrast the motive of obtaining favor from God with the motive of obtaining favor from living human beings (e.g., Matt. 23:5–12, 23–28; Luke 11:38–44). This suggests that construction at the tombs of the dead was undertaken to win favor with God and the living members of the Jewish community. Construction at the tombs of the dead was certainly not the only means of trying to win favor with God or trying to win favor with the living Jewish community. Construction at the tombs of the dead can be placed in a wider context that includes other construction activity undertaken on behalf of the Jewish community. The motives of Jews who paid for construction activities at various tombs can be understood in approximately the same way as the motives of Jews who paid for synagogue construction and other public service projects from their own pockets.[185]

As in the case of building and restoring synagogues, building and restoring tombs provided many Jews with an opportunity to win favor with God and the local community through a simple response to the practical needs of the community. Communal expansion in villages and suburbs often encroached on local cemeteries. In many cases this ultimately necessitated the transferal of some burials to new tombs constructed to receive the remains of persons who had been dead for many generations.[186] In other cases restorative construction at various tombs may have provided an alternative that allowed the corpse to remain in its original tomb while at the same time restricting the uncleanness within the tomb, distinguishing the unclean area more clearly from its surroundings, and allowing for more extensive use of land next to the tombs.[187] In other cases tombs that had become structurally unsound over time posed hazards to those who lived nearby.[188] Pious individuals may have undertaken restorative work at these tombs to ensure the safety of the community and to prevent the plunder of the tombs. These rather mundane concerns contrast with the motives of Herod the Great and wealthy Christian bishops in later periods who lavished great wealth on tombs with the express purpose of transforming simple burial sites into attractive pilgrimage centers.[189]

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[185] E.g., see the dedicatory inscriptions in *JIGRE* 13, 16, 17, 28.

In conclusion, pilgrimage to the tombs of major Jewish ancestors and a few other figures played an important role in expressing relationships of kinship and national identity in Palestine during the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. But traditions of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors experienced only a limited growth in these periods. One therefore cannot expect to find much explicit evidence for pilgrimage to these tombs by Jews from Egypt.

D. *Pilgrimage to the Tombs of Jewish Heroes and Ancestors in Egypt*

Like many Jews in Palestine, Philo and other Jews in Egypt held to beliefs in the intercession of the dead and the supererogatory value of the merits of the righteous (*Praem.* 166). But these beliefs were probably not sufficient to inspire very many Jews to make long and costly journeys from Egypt solely for the purpose of visiting the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors in Palestine. Probably the few Jews from Egypt who ever saw the tombs of major kings and ancestors in Palestine visited these tombs only in the course of pilgrimage to one of the major festivals in Jerusalem. It is difficult to find any certain evidence of Jewish interest even in the tombs of Jewish heroes that might have died in Egypt. Traditions about Jeremiah and Joseph provide two examples.

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[186] Cf. Ezek. 43:7–9; *Semachot* 13:9; 14:8–10 (contrast 13:5–7); Meyers, *Jewish Ossuaries*, 84; Rahmani, "Funerary Customs," part 2, 233. What is forbidden in *Semachot* is often indicative of what was actually practiced in earlier periods.

[187] Cf. *Semachot* 14:9–10.

[188] Cf. Cassius Dio *Hist. Rom.* 69.14.2; *Semachot* 14:8.

[189] Cf. Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 39–42, on the role of clergy wealth in promoting the cult of the saints. On the tombs built by Herod, which shared features of construction with the Jerusalem temple, see above and Josephus *J.W.* 4.530–33; Miller, "Patriarchal Burial Site," 26–43.

C.C. Torrey, Joachim Jeremias, and others have argued on the basis of *Lives of the Prophets* 2:1–7 that the tomb of Jeremiah was located in Egypt.[190] Some Jews may indeed have concluded from Jer. 43:1–44:30 that Jeremiah died and was buried in Egypt. The Qumran *Apocryphon of Jeremiah* (4Q385b, 4Q387b) does seem to picture Jeremiah in Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem. But the published fragments do not indicate either the manner or location of Jeremiah's death. Jeremiah's activity after the fall of Jerusalem is most commonly associated in ancient Jewish tradition with Babylon and Jerusalem rather than Egypt.[191]

This is only one of the obstacles to accepting a Jewish origin for the legend of Jeremiah's tomb preserved in *Lives* 2:1–7.[192] As pointed out above, the *Lives* is probably a Christian composition of the fourth or fifth century. Most of the traditions associated with Jeremiah in the *Lives* can be attributed to biblical interpretation by Christians of Greco-Egyptian origin.[193] The tension within the *Lives* over the location of the bones of Jeremiah suggests that these traditions may have originated in a conflict over a Christian cult of Jeremiah's relics. This cult probably began at some site in the Egyptian countryside, was soon noticed by the increasingly powerful church in Alexandria, and was quickly transferred to Alexandria to promote the ascendancy of the Alexandrian church and its bishop over the rest of the churches in Egypt.[194] The nature of the ecclesiastical conflicts that this presupposes indicates that the traditions about the tomb of Jeremiah in the *Lives* probably do not predate the rise of the bishop of Alexandria in the middle of the third century.

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[190] Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets: Greek Text and Translation*, JBLMS 1 (Philadelphia 1946), 3–12, 49–52; Jeremias, *Heilengräber*, 108–110.

[191] E.g., *2 Apoc. Bar.* 10:2–5; *4 Baruch (Paraleip. Jer.)* 3:15; 4:6; 5:19; 6:11–19; 7:5–8:12; Jewish source (Eupolemus) of Alexander Polyhistor in Eusebius *PE* 9.39.2–5; possibly also Bar. 1:1–9, though Jeremiah is not explicitly mentioned; so also later in *y. Sanh.* 1.19a; *Seder Olam* 26. *4 Baruch* (*Paraleip. Jer.*) 9:11–32 is also set in Jerusalem, though this section of the book is heavily reworked by Christian redactors. Josephus *Ant.* 10.180–82 might furnish the rationale for placing Jeremiah in Babylon. Cf. Samuel Klein, "Al Ha-Sefer Vitae Prophetarum," *Sefer Klozner: Me'asef Le-Madaʿ U-Le-Sifrut Yafah Mugash Le-Professor Yosef Klozner Le-Yovel Ha-Shishim [Festschrift Joseph Klausner]*, ed. N.H. Tortshinar, A.A. Kavek, A. Tcherikover, B. Shochtamez (Tel Aviv 1937), 189–209, esp. 195.

[192] E.g., Torrey, *Lives of the Prophets*, 3–12, 49–52; Jeremias, *Heilengräber*, 108–110.

[193] Satran, *Biblical Prophets*, 38–78; cf. David Frankfurter, "The Cult of the Martyrs in Egypt Before Constantine: The Evidence of the Coptic Apocalypse of Elijah," *VC* 48 (1994):25–47, esp. 36. E.g., the interest in healing snakebites is typical of Egyptian magic. The scattering of the bones of Jeremiah around Alexandria is influenced by the mythology of Osiris and is modelled directly upon Greco-Roman descriptions of the founding of the city. The speculation about where Jeremiah hid the ark could have been inspired by a simple reading of 2 Macc. 2:1–8 or one of

For many Jews in the late Second Temple Period the use of relics derived from the dead probably would have been an inconceivable violation of honor to the dead. Concern for a proper and undisturbed burial was common in antiquity and by no means limited to Jews.[195] The author of Tobit perhaps represents an extreme example of this concern (Tob. 1:17–19; 2:3–9, 14). But whether or not the author of Tobit's concern for burying the dead was an extreme, such intense concern was common enough to continue to find expression well into the early rabbinic period (*Semachot* 4:19). Some educated Alexandrian Jews in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods opposed even the purely academic use of corpses for dissection.[196] Some Jewish magicians certainly must have secretly engaged in necromancy and practiced magical techniques that required the use of the physical remains of a dead person.[197] But even Jewish magic was often expressed within the framework of devotion to principles of the Torah that made certain practices unacceptable.[198]

Jewish interest in the physical remains of ancient heroes does some-

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the other Jewish sources preserved by Christians. The manner of Jeremiah's death, the site of his murder, and the place of his burial can be explained as inferences made by Christian readers from Jer. 43:1–44:30; Matt. 23:29–37; Luke 11:47–51; 13:33; Heb. 11:37; and other texts. Jeremiah is indeed stoned in *4 Baruch* (*Paraleipomena Jeremiou*) 9:11–32. But the setting is Jerusalem and the event is described in a section of the book heavily reworked by Christian redactors.

[194] Cf. Satran, *Biblical Prophets*, 112, and the conflicts described in Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 131–37. In the actions of "Alexander the Macedonian" in the *Lives* it would be tempting to find a garbled allusion to Alexander the bishop of Alexandria in the early 4th century. But almost any Alexandrian bishop of the 3rd to the 5th centuries could be implied.

[195] Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 1–11. Cf. Josephus *Ant.* 16.179–87.

[196] Ps-Phocylides 99–104 and P.W. Van der Horst's notes, "Pseudo-Phocylides," *OTP* 2.568, 577. Cf. Philo *Hypoth.* 358–59.

[197] E.g., cf. *PGM* 1.247–62; 19b.4–18; 58.1–14; cf. 16.1–75.

[198] E.g., Tob. 6:4–8, 15–17; 8:2–3; 11:4–13; 11QPsAp(a) (= 11Q11). Spells in *Sepher Ha-Razim* (3rd–4th century CE) often betray a non-Jewish origin but have all been set within the context of Jewish ritual purity and cosmology.

times appear in exegetical contexts. But this was usually motivated solely by issues within the biblical text itself. For example, exegetical speculation about the bones of Joseph does not imply the existence of a cult of relics or tombs of Joseph scattered throughout Egypt like the body parts of Osiris.[199] The direction taken in Jewish speculation about the bones of Joseph was driven by passages in Genesis that suggested an assimilation of Joseph to Egyptian kingship.[200] Joseph's kingly roles quite logically led some interpreters to conclude that he was given temporary burial in the tombs of the kings (*T. Sim.* 8:3). Jewish interpreters in Egypt and others familiar with Egyptian tradition were well aware that the ideology of Egyptian kingship and beliefs about the dead were inextricably bound up with the mythology of Osiris. Thus it was only natural that some of them would have infused the mythology of Osiris into their speculation about the bones of Joseph (e.g., *Mek. Beshallah* 1 on Exod. 13:19). The subsequent development of this speculation continued to be motivated by an internal exegetical logic.[201] Statements in ancient Jewish texts about the actual location of Joseph's tomb consistently identify it with either Shechem or Hebron.[202]

E. *Conclusions*

Some rather tentative conclusions about Jewish identity in Egypt can now be drawn from our study of pilgrimage to various tombs in the period from 332 BCE to 117 CE.

(1) Jews who adopted Hellenistic identity often did so without consciously forfeiting their Jewish identity. Jewish burial traditions in Egypt shared many features with Hellenistic burials. But many Jews did not adopt Hellenistic practices without reservations about the use

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[199] Cf. Frankfurter, "Cult of the Martyrs," 36–37.

[200] E.g., Gen. 41:33, 40–45, 55; 42:30; 45:8–9, 26. Cf. *Jub.* 40:6–11; 43:2, 19, 23; 46:3; Philo *Jos.* 2–3, 7, 119–120; Josephus *Ant.* 2.174.

[201] James L. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* (New York 1990), 125–55.

[202] Josh. 24:32 (Shechem); Acts 7:16 (Shechem); *T. Jos.* 20:2–6 (Hebron). Josephus *Ant.* 2.198–200 says that Joseph's brothers were buried in Hebron and refers to the transfer of Joseph's bones to Palestine. But he does not explicitly say where in Palestine Joseph was buried, possibly because he wanted to avoid saying that it was in Samaritan territory. Some texts, such as *Jub.* 46:8–9, do state that Joseph was buried in Egypt. But the setting in these cases is before the exodus, when Joseph's bones were taken to Palestine.

of images and other practices commonly associated with Hellenistic burials.

(2) Some minimal boundaries were often maintained between Jewish identity and Egyptian identity. Cultic activities at Jewish tombs by Jews from Egypt or within Egypt appear to have been much more limited in scope than indigenous Egyptian funerary cult activity. But as will be seen below in the discussion of Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu), boundaries between Jewish practices and Egyptian practices were probably more permeable in Upper Egypt than they were in Alexandria, Tell el-Yehoudieh, and other sites in Lower Egypt.

(3) Traditions of pilgrimage to the tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors appear to have been understood within the framework of an emphasis on kinship relationships. This implies a direct continuity with the cultural assumptions that were central to the cult of the dead in the preexilic period. Unlike the later rabbinic period, the presupposition of shared Jewish identity was often more important than the wisdom or charismatic qualities that the individual in the tomb may have possessed while still alive. Jews in Egypt still may have taken an interest in the tombs of prophets, sages, and other religious specialists. But this interest seems to have played only a minimal role in the experience of the Jewish communities in Hellenistic and early Roman Egypt.

(4) One cannot assume a Jewish precedent for all early Christian pilgrimage traditions. Some of the motives for Jewish interest in the tombs of the dead in this period may have influenced the later Christian cult of the saints. But unlike the later Christian cult of the saints, Jewish interest in the tombs of the dead probably only rarely broke out of the patterns of social obligation implied in relationships of kinship.

IV. *Pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai*

A. *Introduction*

Exodus traditions played a central role in Jewish identity in the Greco-Roman period. The mythology of national origins, the distinctive outlines of Jewish ritual and legal practice, and the Jewish liturgy read in the synagogues were all based directly upon the exodus traditions. Jerusalem appropriated the ritual potential of these traditions through the yearly pilgrimage festivals celebrated in the temple. Jews who could not go to Jerusalem to celebrate these festivals also usually could not go to distant sites associated with the events of the exodus. Instead they developed alternatives by which Passover and other festivals associated with the exodus could be celebrated within their own homes and synagogues. Jewish identity therefore became almost completely detached from concrete sites associated with the mythology of the exodus. This made it easy for Byzantine Christians to attach traditions about the exodus to new sites that had never been associated with the exodus in Jewish tradition.

The following discussion of post-biblical Jewish traditions concerning Mt. Sinai will demonstrate that Jews in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods had only a minimal interest in pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai and other sites along the route of the exodus. Those who did make pilgrimages to Mt. Sinai must have gone to a site somewhere near the city of Madyan in northwestern Arabia. A continuous tradition extending from ca. 250 BCE to the present has persistently located Mt. Sinai near the city of Madyan. The city of Madyan was identified with the home town of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, in the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures (LXX/OG), later Jewish sources in the Greco-Roman period, early Christian sources up through the Byzantine period, classical Islamic sources, and Islamic sources from the early modern period. The traditions found in these sources have long ceased to exercise any influence in Jewish tradition and interpretation. But they continue to be elaborated and transmitted in the modern Saudi Arabian town of Al-Badʿ, which occupies the site of ancient Madyan. One of the mountains near Al-Badʿ even may be identified with the Mt. Sinai of early post-biblical Jewish tradition. The question of whether this mountain should be identified with the Mt. Sinai of preexilic Israelite tradition is beyond the scope of this study and will receive only brief comment.

B. *Mt. Sinai in Preexilic Tradition*

A critical historical understanding of Israelite origins cannot rest solely upon the simple picture of an exodus from Egypt.[203] But the imagery of the exodus is firmly embedded within Israelite tradition. Traditions about the Israelite journey through the desert provided an ideal paradigm for pilgrimage. Passover, Sukkoth, and other Jewish festivals explicitly followed this paradigm. Celebration of these festivals affirmed Jewish identity by incorporating the individual into the salvation history of the covenant people.[204] Pilgrimage to sites along the route of the exodus may have provided an even more concrete means of affirming one's identification with this history. One of the most important sites on the exodus route was the mountain, group of mountains, or region variously identified in preexilic traditions with the names Sinai and Horeb.[205]

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[203] E.g., Niels Peter Lemche, "Israel, History of: Premonarchic Period," *ABD*

Martin Noth argued that the itinerary of the Israelites in Num. 33:3–49 was an independent unit of tradition derived from an early Israelite pilgrimage itinerary.[206] Working backward from known sites at the end of this itinerary, Noth argued that a number of more obscure sites in the itinerary could be identified with places in northwestern Arabia and that the ultimate goal of the pilgrimage underlying the itinerary was Mt. Sinai. Noth suggested that early Israelite pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai continued the actual practice of the Israelites in the desert and only declined after later traditions gave more prominence to pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Noth proposed that the itinerary in Numbers 33 suggested that Mt. Sinai was located somewhere in the volcanic region south of Tebuk in northwestern Arabia. Noth has been criticized on a number of points, especially for identifying some of the sites along the Israelite itinerary on the basis of modern names attributed to sites by Bedouins.[207] It has also been pointed

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3.526–45; Dever, "Israel, History of: Archaeology and the Israelite 'Conquest'," 545–58.

[204] E.g., Exod. 12:14–27; 23:14–15; Lev. 23:39–43; Deut. 16:1–3; Ezekiel Trag. *Exagoge* 167–171 in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.12; *Jub.* 49:1–23; *m. Pesach.* 9:4–5.

[205] Jean Koenig, "La Localisation du Sinaï et les traditions des scribes," *RHPR* 43 (1963):2–31 (part 1); *RHPR* 44 (1964):200–235 (part 2); esp. part 1, 30–32, argues that an original "Horeb Sinai" referred to the "wasteland of the moon god Sin" and was abbreviated to "Sinai" in J, which was later followed in the archaizing tendencies of P, while E and D preferred the simple "Horeb" to avoid reference to the moon god. More convincing is Ernst Axel Knauf, *Midian: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nordarabiens am Ende des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.*, Abhandlung des Deutschen Palästinavereins (Wiesbaden 1988), 48–50, who sees "Sinai" as a geographical term expressing the homeland of Yahweh, citing Judg. 5:4–5; Psa. 68:8–9; and Semitic parallels. Too late appeared M. Smith and E. Bloch-Smith's new book.

[206] Martin Noth, "Der Wallfahrtsweg zum Sinai (4. Mose 33)," *PJ* 36 (1940):5–28.

[207] Beat Zuber, *Vier Studien zu den Ursprüngen Israels*, OBO 9 (Freiburg and Göttingen 1976), 64–72, points out that in 1951 Philby and his Bedouin guides were only able

out that the itinerary in Numbers 33 may be nothing more than an attempt to summarize earlier traditions by an editor who knew little or nothing about the locations given in these traditions.[208] The image of early Israelite pilgrimage envisioned by Noth cannot be entirely dismissed, but its details probably cannot be reconstructed on the basis of Numbers 33.[209]

The "journey of eleven days" from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea cited in Deuteronomy 1:2 provides a more secure testimony to a late preexilic identification of a specific location with Mt. Horeb.[210] The tradition recorded in Deut. 1:2 may have found its *Sitz im Leben* in preexilic pilgrimages to Mt. Horeb. Nowhere, however, is there certain evidence of a national custom of pilgrimage to this mountain. Elijah's journey to "Horeb, the mountain of God" in 1 Kings 19 is the only picture of a pilgrimage to this mountain in the biblical text. If it is at all representative of actual pilgrimages, it suggests pilgrimages by individuals and small groups rather than a national custom.

Whether or not such pilgrimages did occur in the preexilic period, they did not continue into the postexilic period with sufficient frequency to provide enough evidence to identify any known site with Mt. Horeb and/or Mt. Sinai. None of the many proposed sites for Mt. Sinai have found universal acceptance among scholars.[211] The

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to securely confirm about 41 (and 8 more with less certainty) of the 102 geographical names mentioned by Musil, who had traveled through the same part of northwestern Arabia in 1910. Bedouins quickly forgot the names of sites that they did not visit and apparently created new names for unknown sites when they moved into new areas.

[208] Knauf, *Midian*, 54–55.

[209] Cf. Jean Koenig, "Itinéraires sinaïtiques in Arabie," *RHR* 166 (1964):121–41, for an attempt to pursue Noth's insight with modifications.

[210] Graham I. Davies, "The Significance of Deuteronomy 1.2 for the Location of Mount Horeb," *PEQ* 111 (1979):87–101. Note, however, that I do not find Davies's arguments about "the way of Mt. Seir" convincing (e.g., his concluding argument is pointless; no one places Horeb at ʿAqaba and not all routes from northwestern Arabia to Palestine led through ʿAqaba).

[211] Surveys of the major positions are in Joseph J. Hobbs, *Mount Sinai* (Austin 1995), 51–57; Itzhaq Beit-Arieh, "The Route Through Sinai: Why the Israelites Fleeing Egypt Went South," *BARev* 15/3 (May/June 1988), 28–37; Knauf, *Midian*, 48–60; Emmanuel Anati, *Har Karkom: The Mountain of God* (New York 1986), 157–254; Paul Maiberger, *Topographische und historische Untersuchungen zum Sinaiproblem: Worauf beruht die Identifizierung des Gabal Musa mit dem Sinai?*, OBO 54 (Göttingen 1984), 11–44; Menashe Har-El, *The Sinai Journeys: The Route of the Exodus* (San Diego 1983), 175–297. Against Anati, see G.I. Davies, "The Wilderness Itineraries and Recent Archaeological Research," *Studies in the Pentateuch*, ed. J.A. Emerton, VTSup 41 (Leiden 1990), 161–75.

persistence with which Bible atlases and standard reference works continue to favor a location in the southern Sinai peninsula merely testifies to the inertia of one stream of scholarly tradition.[212] Inscriptions from the Christian pilgrimage routes in the southern Sinai peninsula demonstrate that Jews in the pre-Christian period had absolutely no interest in pilgrimage to this region.[213] Christian pilgrimage to this region was, as Rudolf Solzbacher has forcefully demonstrated, a completely new innovation.[214]

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[212] E.g., the support of Jewish tradition is claimed for locating Mt. Sinai in the southern Sinai peninsula in G.I. Davies, "Sinai, Mount," *ABD* 6.47–49, and the comments in James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Harper Bible Atlas* (= *The Times Atlas of the Bible*; New York 1987), 56–57. I have not been able to discover even a single pre-Christian Jewish source to support these claims. On the supposed "2d-century AD Jewish source" cited by Davies, see below.

[213] Rudolf Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen: Studien zum Frühchristentum auf der südlichen Sinaihalbinsel—Von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn islamischer Herrschaft*, Münsteraner Theologische Abhandlungen 3 (Altenberge 1989), 44–74; Avraham Negev, *The Inscriptions of Wadi Haggag, Sinai*, Qedem: Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology 6 (Jerusalem 1977), 62–67, 73–74, 79; cf. Knauf, *Midian*, 114–24. Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions merely testify to cooperation between the Egyptians and Semitic peoples in exploiting the mineral wealth of the Sinai peninsula in the Bronze Age. This tells little about the exodus, except perhaps that people trying to escape the Egyptians would have avoided this area because of the Egyptian troops stationed in the area to guard Egyptian interests; correctly noted by Har-El, *Sinai Journeys*, 204–205, 224–26. Nabatean inscriptions became common in the southern Sinai peninsula in the Roman period for purely commercial reasons (discussed by Solzbacher and Negev). As Solzbacher points out, the Nabateans were newcomers to the region and can hardly provide the "missing link" between biblical and Christian tradition. Nabatean inscriptions of the Roman period are followed by a flood of Christian inscriptions from the Byzantine period and later. Jewish inscriptions rarely occur at all. No inscriptions from the southern Sinai peninsula can be found in G.I. Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions: Corpus and Concordance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), which includes all known Hebrew inscriptions to 200 BCE. Later evidence is almost as sparse. Out of 6,000 inscriptions from the region, one is Aramaic and four are Hebrew. Only a few others are of Jewish origin; cf. Michael E. Stone and Leslie Avital Kobayashi, *Rock Inscriptions and Graffiti Project: Catalogue of Inscriptions*, SBLRBS 28, 29 (2 vols; Atlanta 1992). Stone summed up the inscriptional evidence and other sources in a private communication of June 30, 1997, by saying, "I know of no real evidence for Jewish interest in the Sinai in the pre-Christian period and precious little later."

[214] Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen*, 38–40, 74, *et passim*. Bernd Jorg Diebner, "Sinaitische Wallfahrtstraditionen im Vorchristliche Judentum?" *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie*, 2.690–99, admits that Solzbacher has shown that there is no evidence of a Jewish precedent for Christian pilgrimage to the southern Sinai peninsula. Unfortunately, Diebner goes on to speculate that the very existence of Christian tradition is itself evidence of a Jewish tradition of exegesis and pilgrimage relating to the southern Sinai peninsula. This kind of speculation might be productive if it did not completely ignore the evidence that does exist. Jewish exegetical traditions consistently take a different position altogether; cf. below.

Biblical and post-biblical evidence consistently suggests that most Israelite traditions identified Horeb and Sinai with some location in northwestern Arabia east of the Red Sea rather than anywhere in the Sinai peninsula.[215] Scholars in the English-speaking world have been relatively slow to adopt this position because they are resistant to the idea commonly expressed in continental scholarship that the imagery of the Sinai theophany was shaped by volcanic phenomena in northwestern Arabia.[216] But the notion that Mt. Sinai was a volcanic mountain is hardly essential to the position that Mt. Sinai was located in northwestern Arabia. E.A. Knauf has suggested, for example, that Yahweh was originally a divinized mountain or mountain god from northwestern Arabia who shared the characteristics of Syrian-Arabian storm gods.[217] Regardless of the question of the origins of Yahwism, biblical traditions concerning Sinai and Horeb are best explained if these terms referred to a location in the Midianite territory of northwestern Arabia.

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[215] See Knauf, *Midian*, 43–63; Koenig, "Localisation," *passim*. Moses (and later the Israelites) arrived at Mt. Horeb only after what was clearly intended to be a flight out of Egyptian territory (Exod. 2:15; 3:1; 4:18–20; cf. 13:17–15:27). If this has any historical basis, then none of the many proposed sites in the Sinai peninsula can be given any credence. The entire Sinai peninsula at least as far east as the Aravah was within Egyptian territory in the Late Bronze Age. Egyptian interests were guarded by Egyptian troops, especially in the southwestern Sinai peninsula, as testified by reliefs and the sheer importance of the turquoise and copper mines of the region. See Har-El, *Sinai Journeys*, 16, 204–205, 224–26, 373. Har-El does not seem to realize that the evidence that he cites for military activity and royal interests in the Sinai peninsula completely excludes his own notion that Mt. Sinai should be identified with Jebel Sin Bisher (pp. 415–25). Jebel Sin Bisher was located right beside the route traversed by Egyptian troops guarding caravans from the mines. These points would be of much less value, of course, if there was no Late Bronze Age exodus.

Regardless of the historical value of the sources for discussion of events in the Late Bronze Age, the sources consistently associate Mt. Sinai with the Edomite and Midianite territory of southwestern Jordan and northwestern Saudi Arabia rather than the Sinai peninsula; e.g., Exod. 2:15–3:1; 18:1–19:2; Deut. 1:2; 33:2; Judg. 5:4–5; cf. Hab. 3:3, 7. Knauf, *Midian*, 43–52, notes that the earliest known reference to Yahweh (in an Egyptian text of the 14th century BCE) also associates Yahweh with a mountain somewhere in the Midianite territory of northwestern Arabia. The southern Sinai peninsula was quite simply not in Midianite territory. The boundaries of Midianite territory were just slightly southwest of modern Eilat on the extreme northwestern shore of the gulf of ʿAqaba; e.g., Garth Bawden, "Painted Pottery of Tayma and Problems of Cultural Chronology in Northwest Arabia," *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia*, ed. John F.A. Sawyer and David J.A. Clines, JSOTSup 24 (Sheffield 1983), 37–52; Beno Rothenberg and Jonathan Glass, "The Midianite Pottery," *Midian, Moab, and Edom*, 65–124; cf. Peter J. Parr, "Pottery of the Late Second Millennium BC from North West Arabia and its Historical Implications," *Araby the Blest: Studies in Arabian Archaeology*, ed. D.T. Potts, Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications 7 (Copenhagen 1988), 73–89 (who insists on the accuracy of identifying "Qurayya painted ware" with Late Bronze Age Midianites even after he himself proposes the new name for the pottery style). On early post-biblical traditions concerning the location of Mt. Sinai, see below.

[216] Cf. Jean Koenig, "Aux origenes des théophanies iahvistes," *RHR* 169 (1966): 1–36. Objections to this position include attempts to distinguish volcanic imagery from thunderstorm imagery in the theophany. Such objections rest on a false dichotomy. Thunderstorms often appear in the ash clouds of volcanoes; Robert W. Decker and Barbara B. Decker, *Mountains of Fire: The Nature of Volcanoes* (New York 1991), 39. See further below.

Recent archaeological surveys and excavations in northwestern Arabia have revealed thousands of inscriptions, previously unknown archaeological sites, and a vast body of new material evidence that archaeologists and historians who work in this region have only begun to digest.[218] The paucity of evidence for Israelite pilgrimage in the literary sources should warn us not to hope for too much new evidence of Israelite pilgrimage even from this region. But so much new material is already available that it has become inexcusable to ignore the archaeology of northwestern Arabia. Surely this region deserves as much attention as has been given to the Sinai peninsula, which has yielded only meager evidence for Israelite and early Jewish history despite all the work expended on it.

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[217] Knauf, *Midian*, 43–63. Knauf correctly observes that the divinization of mountains, trees, or rocks in themselves hardly needed the inspiration of a volcanic eruption or any other remarkable event.

[218] In addition to the sources cited below, see, e.g., M.C.A. MacDonald, "North Arabia in the First Millennium BCE," *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (4 vols; New York 1995), 2.1355–69; Peter J. Parr, "The Early History of the Hejaz: A Response to Garth Bawden," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 4 (1993):48–58; Garth Bawden, "Continuity and Discontinuity in the Ancient Hejaz: An Assessment of Current Archaeological Strategies," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 3 (1992):1–22; Peter J. Parr, "Aspects of the Archaeology of North-west Arabia in the First Millennium BC," *L'Arabie Préislamique et son Environnement Historique et Culturel: Actes due Colloque de Strasbourg 24–27 juin 1987* (ed. T. Fahd; Travaux du Centre de Recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce Antiques 10; Leiden 1989), 39–66; Ahmed Kisnawi, Prentiss S. de Jesus, Baseem Rihani, and Juris Zarins, "Preliminary Report on the Mining Survey, Northwest Hijaz, 1982," *Atlal* 7 (1983):76–83, plates 79–81; Michael Gilmore, Mohammed Al-Ibrahim, and Abduljawwad S. Murad, "Comprehensive Archaeological Survey Program: Preliminary Report on the Northwestern and Northern Region Survey 1981:(1401)" *Atlal* 6 (1982):9–23, plates 1–15; Michael Lloyd Ingraham, Theodore D. Johnson, Baseem Rihani, and Ibrahim Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province (with a Note on a Brief Survey of the Northern Province)," *Atlal* 5 (1981):59–84, plates 65–97. Still indispensable are H. St. John Philby, *The Land of Midian* (London 1957); and especially Alois Musil, *The Northern Hegaz: A Topographical Itinerary*, American Geographical Society Oriental Explorations and Studies 1 (New York 1926).

C. *Jewish Sources from Egypt on Pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai in the Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods*

1. *Pilgrimage or Biblical Interpretation?*

Preexilic Israelite traditions about the exodus play an inescapably obvious role in the biblical text. This creates a serious methodological difficulty for any attempt to study post-biblical traditions of pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai and other sites along the route of the exodus. Statements in post-biblical texts that might seem to imply knowledge of actual sites along the route of the exodus may be nothing more than the product of biblical interpretation. Elaborate descriptions of a site may be generated simply by following the internal logic of a hermeneutical system.

For example, the use of Hellenistic place names in the LXX/OG, the writings of Artapanus, and other sources from Egypt implies that Jews in Greco-Roman Egypt often identified biblical sites within Egypt with places that they knew.[219] Updating geographical nomenclature in the Bible was merely one element in the process of translating Hebrew traditions into Greek. In some cases it represented nothing more than simple acquiescence to the new names given to biblical sites under various Hellenistic rulers.[220] In other cases it may have expressed distinctive interpretive traditions related to various geographical terms.[221] Some of the sites mentioned in the biblical text were certainly visited or even inhabited by Jews. But the simple modification of biblical nomenclature is completely inadequate in itself to provide a basis for arguing that a site was the focus of a pilgrimage tradition. Unfortunately much of the evidence for Jewish knowledge of the desert itinerary of the Israelites and the location of Mt. Sinai is of precisely this type.

2. *The Septuagint/Old Greek Version*

The earliest source outside the Hebrew Bible that provides evidence for Jewish traditions concerning the location of Mt. Sinai is the LXX

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[219] E.g., Heroopolis in Gen. 46:28–29 LXX; Heliopolis, Sais, and Athos in Artapanus in Eusebius *PE* 9.23.3–4; 9.27.2. Cf. Graham I. Davies, *The Way of the Wilderness: A Geographical Study of the Wilderness Itineraries in the Old Testament*, SOTSMS 5 (Cambridge 1979), 4–6.

[220] E.g., "On" in Gen. 41:45, 50; 46:20 MT becomes "Heliopolis" in the LXX.

[221] E.g., "Cushan" in Hab. 3:7 MT becomes "Ethiopians" in the OG (discussed below).

(the Greek version of the Pentateuch), which appeared ca. 250 BCE and was followed in the next few decades by the OG (the Greek version of the rest of the Hebrew Bible). The LXX/OG translators transformed the Midianite location of Mt. Sinai into "the land of Madiam" (γῆ Μαδιαμ; Exod. 2:15–16; cf. Hab. 3:7). In a few cases the spelling is given as "Madian" (Μαδιαν) with no apparent difference in meaning and often with manuscript variants that read "Madiam."[222] The LXX/OG "Madiam" and "Madian" served as the standard Greek equivalents for the Hebrew Bible's word for "Midian." Thus "Madiam" is associated in the LXX/OG with the traditional Midianite territory of northwestern Arabia. The LXX/OG translators went beyond the Hebrew Bible, however, because they identified "Madiam" as a city complete with a city council (γερουσία Μαδιαν, in Num. 22:4, 7 LXX; πολις Μαδιαμα in 3 Kgdms 11:17–18 OG).[223] As a result of this Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, could no longer simply "come to Moses at the place in the desert where he was camping" as he had done in the Hebrew of Exod. 18:5. In the Greek version of this verse Jethro had to go "out" of the city of Madiam and "into the desert" to see Moses at the mountain of God (Exod. 18:1, 5 LXX).[224] This suggests that the LXX translators identified the city of Madiam with the home of Jethro. Jethro was thereby transformed from a tribal Midianite priest into the civic priest of the city of Madiam (Exod. 2:15–16; 3:1; 4:19; 18:1–5 LXX).[225] The translator(s) of the Greek version of Hab. 3:7 added another detail to the traditions about this city when he (they) implied that the inhabitants of Madiam (Madian) included Ethiopians. This was implied when he (they) translated the MT "Cushan" as "Ethiopians" (Hab. 3:7 OG). The relationship between the Ethiopians of Madiam in Hab. 3:7 and Mt. Sinai was firmly established by the use of the Sinai theophany traditions in Hab. 3:3–7.

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[222] The word "Madian" in Num. 22:4, 7; 25:15, 18; 31:3, 7–9; seems to have approximately the same referent in each case and often appears as "Madiam" in textual variants. In Num. 31:8 the "kings of Madian" include "Euin" and "Robok," while the parallel passage in Josh. 21:13 says that the "rulers of Madiam" include "Eui" and "Robe." The variation between Madian and Madiam in the context of other orthographic variations suggests that "Madiam" and "Madian" may be simple orthographic or dialectical variants of the name of the same city. The spelling "Madiam" might have been the original reading in many cases because it represents a greater divergence from the Hebrew and the cognate "Madianites." The influence of the Hebrew "Midian" and the word "Madianites" would easily explain the change to "Madian." On the other hand, the original "Madian" could have easily been transformed into "Madiam" by assimilation to the first letter of the following word for "city" (πόλις) once Madian had been identified as a city. Thus Demetrius the Chronographer used the assimilated form ("Madiam") in the phrase "Madiam polis" (Μαδιὰμ πόλις) in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.3. But he probably used "Madian" when the word occurred independently, as it does in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.1 (the manuscripts that read "Madiam" instead of "Madian" in *PE* 9.29.1 probably represent an attempt to bring the text into harmony with *PE* 9.29.3, where the witnesses consistently read "Madiam"). The confusion in the textual tradition of the LXX/OG could easily be explained if, as is probable in Demetrius, the older "Madian" continued to be used after the assimilated form "Madiam" had been created.

[223] Cf. below on Exod. 18:1–5.

[224] The reading (in ms. A *et al.*) that indicates that Jethro simply "went" to Moses in Exod. 18:5 LXX is probably a secondary harmonization with the MT.

The final picture that emerges from the stray references to Madiam and Madian in the LXX/OG is one in which Mt. Sinai was located somewhere near a city named Madiam or Madian. This city was populated by Midianites and Ethiopians and located in traditional Midianite territory. This city was the home of Jethro, a priest in the city, who happens to have had a rather close relationship with Moses.

Some elements of this picture were almost certainly not the product of pilgrimage traditions. Probably one of the reasons why the translators of the LXX/OG associated the Ethiopians with the Midianites was to offer an explanation of how Num. 12:1 could state that Moses had married a "Cushite" or "Ethiopian" woman when Zipporah, the only wife of Moses previously mentioned, was a Midianite (Exod. 2:15–22). The translators of the LXX/OG apparently resolved this difficulty by identifying the Ethiopian woman with Zipporah. They tried to convey this understanding to their readers by placing Ethiopians in Midianite territory in Hab. 3:7 OG. The ease with which they performed this demographic manipulation may be partly credited to a Jewish tradition of tracing the genealogy of the peoples of both western Arabia and eastern Africa to the same ancestors, which in this case conveniently happened to be Abraham and Keturah (Josephus *Ant.* 1.238–41; cf. Gen. 25:1–6 LXX). This Jewish tradition was only one expression of a wider notion, however, in which numerous authors in antiquity asserted that the peoples of the east African coast were closely related to the peoples of Arabia.[226] Placing Ethiopians in the Midianite territory of northwest Arabia thus provided a perfectly logical way of resolving the difficulty presented by Num. 12:1.

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[225] Exod. 2:15–16; 3:1; 4:19; 18:1–5.

[226] Jehan Desanges, "Arabes et Arabie en Terre d'Afrique dans la Géographie Antique," *L'Arabie Préislamique et son Environnement*, 413–29. The close relationships that actually did exist between western Arabia and eastern Africa partly justified this perspective; e.g., Strabo 16.4.4 C768; 16.4.22 C780; cf. Desanges, "Arabes et Arabie en Terre d'Afrique," 420–29.

The transformation of "Midian" into "the city of Madiam," however, was not necessary for resolving this difficulty. The use of "Madiam" probably represents an attempt to update biblical nomenclature by referring to a site with a name and location similar to the site mentioned in the biblical text. Madiam was probably one of two cities with a similar name that the geographer Ptolemy located in northwestern Arabia.[227] One of these cities, which Ptolemy knew as "Modiana or Modouna" (Μοδίανα ἢ Μοδοῦνα), was on the eastern coast of the Red Sea. The other, which Ptolemy called "Madiama" (Μαδίαμα), was in the interior of northwestern Arabia not far away from the first city. The cities may have even been one and the same. Though according to Ptolemy Madiama was situated inland away from the coast, it was probably located on the coastal north-south route at a position where this route was forced to swing inland to go around the coastal mountains.[228] Ptolemy simply may not have recognized that the same city was intended by sources that referred to a city on the coastal route and other sources that referred to an inland city. In any case, the biblical references to Madiam imply an inland site and the spelling of the inland city of Madiama mentioned by Ptolemy is closest to the Madiam of the LXX/OG. Thus Ptolemy's Madiama is probably the Madiam of the LXX/OG. The name of the city represents an attempt to preserve the name of the former Midianite inhabitants (from proto-Arabic [?] *mdyn*; in ancient sources identified as *Midian, Madian, Madianê, Madiam, Madiama, et al.*).[229] The name of the city is preserved in later Arabic sources as "Madyan."[230]

The location of the ancient city of Madyan can be firmly identified with the oasis of Al-Badʿ (Mugha'ir Shuʿayb), which is located in northwestern Saudi Arabia approximately 110 km south of ʿAqaba.[231]

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[227] Ptolemy *Geogr.* 6.7.2, "Μοδίανα ἢ Μοδοῦνα" (Modiana or Modouna); 6.7.27, Μαδιάμα (Madiama); cf. Josephus *Ant.* 2.257, πολις Μαδιανή (city of Madianê); Davies, *Way of the Wilderness*, 10. Though they must be used with caution, see the maps in Edward Luther Stevenson, *Claudius Ptolemy: The Geography* (New York 1991). A modern attempt at reconstructing Ptolemy's map is in Nigel Groom, "Eastern Arabia in Ptolemy's Map," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 16 (1986):65–75, esp. 73–74.

[228] P.J. Parr, G.L. Harding, J.E. Dayton, "Preliminary Survey of N.W. Arabia, 1968 [part 1]," *BIAUL* 8–9 (1968–1969):193–242 and plates, esp. 196–98.

[229] On the form of the name, see Knauf, *Midian*, 77–79.

[230] Musil, *Northern Hegaz*, 278–82 (Madjan = Madyan).

[231] P.J. Parr, G.L. Harding, J.E. Dayton, A.F.L. Beeston, and J.T. Milik, "Prelim-

Midianite (Qurayya) pottery found at Al-Badᶜ testifies to a probable Midianite settlement at the oasis in the Late Bronze Age.[232] In the Greco-Roman period Madyan was located on the major coastal trade route from Leuke Kome (modern ᶜAynunah) to Petra.[233] As a result

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inary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968 [part 2]," *BIAUL* 10 (1971):23–61, plates 1–23; Philby, *Land of Midian*, 212–13, 257–62; Musil, *Northern Hegaz*, 109–118, 278–82. The evidence from other sources is confirmed by the precision with which the location of Al-Badᶜ matches the latitudinal coordinate supplied in Ptolemy *Geogr.* 6.7.27 for Μαδίαμα (Madiama); cf. 6.7.2 on "Μοδίανα ἢ Μοδοῦνα" ("Modiana or Modouna"). In Ptolemy's system Madiama (68 long.; 28 15' lat.) was exactly one degree or 92 km south of Elana (near modern Eilat and ᶜAqaba; 65 50' long., 29 15' lat.). This distance becomes 111 km if one uses the corrected figure of Groom, "Eastern Arabia in Ptolemy's Map," 65–75, esp. 66–67. The longitude that Ptolemy gives for Madiama suggests that Madiama should be about 120 km east of the coast (ca. 66 30' long.), assuming a point of latitude between Omne (66 20' long., 28 50' lat.) and Modiana (66 40' long., 27 45' lat.). The distance of Madiama might even be increased to 150 km east of the coast if a correction is made; cf. the map in Henry Innes MacAdam, "Ptolemy's *Geography* and the Wadi Sirhan," *Géographie Historique au Proche-Orient (Syrie, Phénice, Arabie, grecques, romaines, byzantines)*, ed. Pierre-Louis Gatier, Bruno Helly, et Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, Notes et Monographies Techniques 23 (Paris 1988), 55–76. Thus one should expect Ptolemy's Madiama to have been approximately 111 km south of modern Eilat and 120–150 km east of the coast of the Gulf of ᶜAqaba.

Al-Badᶜ matches the projected figure of 111 km south of Eilat almost perfectly. But Al-Badᶜ is only about 25 km east of the coast rather than the expected 120–150 km. Probably the precision with which Al-Badᶜ matches Ptolemy's latitude figure for Madiama is a result of Ptolemy's use of accurate information derived from persons who traveled on the north-south route that passed from Elana (near modern Eilat and ᶜAqaba) to Madiama. Ptolemy probably did not have accurate information for the longitudinal distance through the rugged coastal mountains because travel through these mountains was not common. The similarity between Madiama and the name of the nearby coastal city of Modiana might suggest that both refer to the same city. Ptolemy may have been unable to reconcile two sets of information, one that correctly affirmed that the location of Madyan was on the coastal route and the other that correctly identified it with an inland city. Ptolemy was probably unaware that the major route along the western coast of the Arabian peninsula actually did not continue along the coast in the Northern Hejaz but turned inland to avoid the coastal mountains and take an easier course through Madyan. The correct longitude lay between the figures Ptolemy gave for Madiama and those for Modiana. Similar distortions are common elsewhere on Ptolemy's map in places where he is concerned with sites for which he only has an accurate perspective of either the longitudinal or latitudinal measurement. Given the numerous distortions of longitude on Ptolemy's map, the precision with which Al-Badᶜ matches the latitude of ancient Madiama is alone an extremely significant datum. Other evidence confirms the identification of Al-Badᶜ with ancient Madyan; cf. the literature cited above in this note.

[232] For Midianite (Qurayya) pottery at Al-Badᶜ, see Parr, Harding, Dayton, *et al.*, "Preliminary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968 [part 2]," 33; Ingraham, Johnson, *et al.*, "Preliminary Report," (1981):74–75.

[233] For the route, see *Periplus* 19.6.26–29 and the comments in Lionel Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Princeton

Madyan became one of the most important of the Nabatean sites in the Arabian Hejaz.[234]

Madyan could easily have been known to the translators of the LXX/OG as a result of early Ptolemaic interest in this region.[235] Some Jews, for example, must have been in the armies of Ptolemy II Philadelphus when he campaigned in the Hejaz in 278/277 BCE.[236] In addition, Jews probably often passed through Madyan because it was on the standard coastal alternative to the major north-south trade route.[237] Such activity in itself does not constitute pilgrimage. But it may partly explain the origins of Jewish interest in a city that eventually may have become the site of pilgrimage. Of course, interest in this city would also be partly explained if there were already Jews who located Mt. Sinai in the Hejaz before the oldest parts of the LXX/OG were translated in the middle of the 3rd century BCE.

3. *Other Jewish Sources from Egypt in the Hellenistic Period*

The LXX/OG exercised a strong influence on Demetrius the Chronographer, who probably lived in Alexandria in the late 3rd century BCE.[238] Like the LXX/OG, Demetrius identified the Midianite Zipporah with the Ethiopian woman without removing her from the traditional Midianite territory of northwestern Arabia. Following the lead of Gen. 25:1–6 LXX and other texts, Demetrius placed both Africans and Midianites together in "the east" (cf. Josephus *Ant.*

1989), 144. On the now accepted identification of Leuke Kome with ʿAynunah, see Ingraham, Johnson, *et al.*, "Preliminary Report," (1981):76–78; Henry I. MacAdam, "Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy of Alexandria: Three Views of Ancient Arabia and Its Peoples," *L'Arabie Préislamique et son Environnement*, 289–320, esp. 299; and Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, 143–44.

[234] Parr, Harding, Dayton, *et al.*, "Preliminary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968 [part 2]," 30–35, 59, plates 12–17; cf. Ingraham, Johnson, *et al.*, "Preliminary Report," (1981):75–78; Philby, *Land of Midian*, 212–13, 257–62; Musil, *Northern Hegaz*, 109–118. For additional inscriptional evidence, see A. Livingstone, M. Khan, A. Zahrani, M. Salluk, and S. Shaman, "Epigraphic Survey, 1404–1984," *Atlal* 9 (1985):128–44 (esp. 141–42), plates 118–32. Livingstone *et al.* (p. 137) note the unfortunate fact that Al-Badʿ (Mughaʾir Shuʿayb) is located in an area of mixed gypsum, sandstone, limestone, and siltstone that is not well suited for inscriptions.

[235] Parr, "Aspects of the Archaeology of North-West Arabia," 51–52.

[236] Parr, "Aspects of the Archaeology of North-West Arabia," 52. Cf. Josephus *Ap.* 1.200–204; 2.42–47.

[237] Parr, Harding, Dayton, "Preliminary Survey of N.W. Arabia, 1968 [part 1]," 197–98; Parr, Harding, Dayton, *et al.*, "Preliminary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968 [part 2]," 30–31.

[238] Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 27, following Clement *Strom.* 1.141.8, places his work in the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (222–205 BCE).

1.238–41). In this way Zipporah could be an Ethiopian and yet still make her first home with Moses in the Midianite "city of Madiam" (Μαδιάμ πόλις).[239] Demetrius consistently relied on the LXX/OG and was probably from Alexandria, so his "Madiam" is undoubtedly the Madiam (Madyan) of the LXX/OG.[240] Thus Demetrius located Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia near the city of Madyan. The value of this for assessing the practice of pilgrimage to a site identified with Mt. Sinai is limited. The fragments of Demetrius consistently demonstrate an obsession with explaining biblical difficulties on the basis of the text of the LXX/OG.[241] Because of this it would be tenuous to argue that his statements about the city of Madyan imply anything more about pilgrimage to this city than what was already implied in the LXX/OG.

As in the LXX/OG and the work of Demetrius, Ezekiel the Tragedian identified the Ethiopian woman with Zipporah in his *Exagoge*. This drama is of unknown provenance but may have been produced in Alexandria in the late third or second century BCE.[242] Unlike the LXX/OG and Demetrius, Ezekiel placed the meeting of Moses and Zipporah in the Ethiopian territory south of Egypt (*Exagoge* 55–67 in Eusebius *PE* 9.28.4). This might suggest that Ezekiel placed Mt. Sinai in Ethiopia. However, no mention of any mountain is made in the description of the call of Moses at the burning bush in the preserved fragments of Ezekiel's drama (*Exagoge* 90–192 in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.7–13). In addition, the Israelites themselves probably did not go down into Ethiopia in their flight from Egypt (*Exagoge* 167–71, 193–242, in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.12, 14).

The only possible explicit reference to "Sinai" in the preserved fragments of the *Exagoge* appears in a dream of Moses in which the crucial lines that describe the mountain appear to be corrupt (*Exagoge* 68–69 in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.5). The text is usually clarified by emending it to include the word "Sinai."[243] If this is correct, the dream may have been introduced partly as an artifice by which Ezekiel could maintain the tradition of a call of Moses on Mt. Sinai without actually locating Mt. Sinai in Ethiopia.[244] If the emended inclusion of "Sinai" is not correct, then Ezekiel's failure to identify the mountain in the dream with Mt. Sinai would again suggest a conscious effort to avoid placing Mt. Sinai in Ethiopia.[245] In either case Ezekiel was able to locate the call of Moses in Ethiopia while at the same time making provision for the tradition of a subsequent visit to Mt. Sinai to receive the Law during the exodus.

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[239] Demetrius in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.1–3. See more fully Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 28–29.

[240] Cf. Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 27–30; Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 1.51–54.

[241] Cf. Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 27–30; Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 1.52–54.

[242] Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 207, proposes the late third century BCE; but see the full discussion in Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors* 2.308–313, who leaves the date at sometime during the second century BCE.

[243] E.g., Karl Mras, *Eusebius Werke: Achter Band: Die Praeparatio Evangelica, Erster Teil*,

The preserved fragments of Ezekiel do not, however, describe this visit to Mt. Sinai. Thus one cannot tell precisely where he located the mountain. It has been suggested, for example, that Ezekiel's drama simply ended with the appearance of the Phoenix bird at Elim and provided an allegory of the pilgrimage of the soul to immortality (*Exagoge* 243–69 in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.16).[246] This would suggest that Ezekiel did not include a visit to Mt. Sinai in his drama at all. The idealized journey of seven days from Egypt to Palestine mentioned by Ezekiel presumes a rather short exodus that certainly would leave no time for a long detour to any mountain located away from the most direct route to Palestine (*Exagoge* 167–71 in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.12). Ezekiel provides no certain evidence that he knew of any actual location associated with Mt. Sinai. He also provides no evidence that he was aware of any Jews who made pilgrimages to a site identified with this mountain.

Aristobulus, who probably lived in Alexandria in the second century BCE, seems to have stated that a journey around Mt. Sinai would take at least five days (Eusebius *PE* 8.10.14; Clement *Strom.*

GCS (Berlin 1954), 529; Guy Schroeder et Edouard des Places, *Eusèbe de Césarée: La Préparation Evangélique Livres 8, 9, 10*, SC 369 (Paris 1991), 290. See the discussion in Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 2.439–40.

[244] This hardly exhausts the possible functions and significance of the dream, however. See Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 2.437–46; Howard Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel* (New York 1983), 89–97; Pieter W. van der Horst, "Moses' Throne Vision in Ezekiel the Dramatist," *JJS* 34 (1983):21–29.

[245] Jacobson, *Exagoge of Ezekiel*, 199–200, note 2, points out that a Hebrew translation of unknown date and provenance omits "Sinai" and reads "on top of a high mountain." On this uncertain basis he proposes ὄρους κατ' ἄκρον αἰπεινοῦ θρόνον ("a throne on the peak of a high mountain"). Against this Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 2.439, notes the association of throne visions with Mt. Sinai in various Jewish traditions.

[246] Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 209–210, who does not commit himself to this interpretation.

6.3.32.5–33.1).[247] This statement might suggest that he knew of a specific mountain to which pilgrimage was sometimes made. Nothing is said about the route around the mountain that would produce this journey of five days, so the actual site cannot be identified from this statement.

No actual site may have been known to Aristobulus at all. The entire context is devoted to exegetical speculation. Immediately before the reference to the "five days" is an estimate of the number of Israelites who were present at the mountain. This estimate is derived by inference from the biblical text itself.[248] The estimate of the journey of five days around Mt. Sinai also may have been derived directly from the biblical text. The phrase used to introduce the estimate of the number of Israelites at the mountain (οὐκ ἔλαττον) is also used to introduce the estimate of the length of the journey around Mt. Sinai (οὐκ ἔλασσον).[249] This parallelism suggests that a similar source or means of arriving at the estimate is being used in each case. But the specific biblical passage that Aristobulus used to arrive at his estimate of a journey of "five days" cannot be determined. The possibility still remains that behind this passage is a specific mountain that Aristobulus identified with Mt. Sinai. But it would be unwise to use this rather ambiguous passage as evidence for pilgrimage or knowledge of any actual location.[250]

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[247] In the version in Eusebius *PE* 8.10.14, the pronoun (αὐτό) could refer to the people of Israel (τὸ πλῆθος) rather than the mountain (τὸ ὄρος), in which case the journey of five days would refer to the distance around the Israelite camp. But the most natural way to understand the passage is that the journey of five days refers to the mountain. Thus the slightly different version in Clement *Strom.* 6.3.32.5 is probably correct in making the journey explicitly refer to the distance around the mountain. For the texts, see Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 3.144.

[248] Cf. Aristobulus in Eusebius *PE* 8.10.14 (which refers to the number of all of the Israelites) with Exod. 12:37–38; 38:26 (39:3 LXX); Num. 1:44–46; 11:21; 26:51 (which refer to the number of fighting men). Exodus 12:37–38 LXX might have been the specific source if Aristobulus interpreted it as a reference to the number of all of the Israelites ("baggage" is excluded in 12:37 LXX rather than the "children" of 12:37 MT. The numbers implied in 12:38 LXX would provide the others needed to arrive at Aristobulus's estimate of at least one million).

[249] The dialectical spelling variation between ἔλαττον and ἔλασσον in Eusebius *PE* 8.10.14 might be a scribal variation. Clement *Strom.* 6.3.32.5 in fact reads οὐκ ἔλασσον ... οὐχ ἧττον. This does not significantly change the meaning or radically affect the parallelism. Eusebius's version may, however, be closer to the original. The most likely explanation of the difference in spelling in Eusebius's text is a simple euphonic assimilation of ἐλαττον to the dental consonants and ἔλασσον to the liquid consonants of the other words in the immediate respective contexts.

[250] It should be noted, however, that a journey of five days would certainly not

Artapanus, who certainly lived in Egypt but might not have lived in Alexandria, probably wrote his account of the exodus no later than 100 BCE.[251] Artapanus placed the homeland of Zipporah in "Arabia" (Eusebius *PE* 9.27.17–21). The use of this word was apparently designed to preserve the biblical tradition of a flight of Moses into the land of Midian in northwestern Arabia. But in this particular case the word may refer to a region of Egypt between the Nile and the Red Sea (Eusebius *PE* 9.27.34).[252] This probably represents another example of the close association that was often made in antiquity between eastern Africa and the Arabian peninsula (cf. above).

Nothing can be inferred about the location of Mt. Sinai from this picture. The version of the call of Moses created by Artapanus differs radically from the biblical account and makes no reference to a mountain at all (Eusebius *PE* 9.27.21). His entire account of the exploits of Moses has been shaped by Egyptian legends about Sesostris, Egyptian versions of the exodus, and other Greek and Egyptian traditions.[253] The romantic fantasy about Moses that results can hardly be used as evidence for Jewish pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai.

4. *Philo*

Philo provides a probable witness from the Roman period to the Alexandrian tradition of locating Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia. Philo does not seem to have identified Zipporah with the Ethiopian wife of Moses and clearly broke with older Alexandrian traditions associating Moses with Ethiopia (*Leg.* 2.67; *Mut.* 103–120; *Mos.* 2.51–59). Zipporah was an "Arab" who lived in "Arabia" (*Mos.* 1.47, 51–52). Philo may have placed Zipporah in "Arabia" because he knew that

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exclude the identification of Aristobulus's Mt. Sinai with Jebel al-Lawz (on this mountain, see the discussion below). Depending on the route taken, a journey around the base of the greater ridge of which Jebel al-Lawz is the dominant mountain would require traversing a distance of approximately 150 km (ca. 95 miles). This is certainly within the range of a typical journey of five days; cf. Davies, "Significance," 89–97. But Aristobulus is too unclear to press this point.

[251] Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 32–33, prefers the end of the third century BCE; reiterated in Collins, "Artapanus," *OTP* 2.890–91. Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 1.189–90, prefers a date under Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BCE).

[252] Cf. Strabo 17.1.21 C802. See Collins, "Artapanus," *OTP* 2.900, 902.

[253] Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, 32–38; Collins, "Artapanus," *OTP* 2.890–94; Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 1.189–93 and notes. E.g., cf. Moses in Artapanus in Eusebius *PE* 9.27.1–21; Sesostris in Diodorus Sic. 1.53.1–1.58.5. See also Josephus *Ap.* 1.223–319; 2.1–32; for Greco-Egyptian versions of the exodus.

this was the traditional homeland of the Midianites. But Philo calls her an Arab because he believed that the Midianites were Arabs (Philo *Virt.* 34).[254] This identification was at least partly suggested by the confusion in Gen. 37:25–36 between the Midianites and the Ishmaelites (Philo *Jos.* 1.15). The Ishmaelites were traditionally understood to be among the ancestors of various Arab tribes.[255] Philo probably placed Zipporah in "Arabia" because this was simply the logical place for Arabs to live.[256] Philo therefore appears to have been using the term "Arabia" in a broad sense to refer to all of the vast desert territory inhabited by Arabs.

Probably this is one of the many examples in which Philo shows the influence of the intellectual traditions of Alexandria. Greco-Roman authors usually understood "Arabia" to include both of two traditional divisions of Arabia:[257] (1) *Arabia Felix*: This phrase was sometimes used for all of the Arabian peninsula and sometimes specifically referred to the commercially important southern region in modern Yemen. Because of the tendency to limit the application of this phrase to the southern part of the Arabian peninsula, the peninsula as a whole was often simply called "Arabia." (2) *Arabia Deserta*: This phrase referred to the entire desert region extending from the northern Arabian peninsula to Palmyra (Tadmor) and the Euphrates, including all of the area between Pelusium and Babylonia. This area was sometimes not distinguished sharply from the Arabian peninsula and, like the Arabian peninsula, was often simply called "Arabia."

Philo was probably using "Arabia" in the broad geographical sense to refer to both Arabia Felix and Arabia Deserta. This is the way the term was used by Strabo in his large extracts on Arabia drawn from Eratosthenes, Agatharchides, and Artemidorus (who relied directly on Agatharchides).[258] Eratosthenes and Agatharchides had been among the leading intellectual figures in Ptolemaic Alexandria.[259] As a result their work played an extremely influential role in shaping the Alexandrian geographical traditions that provided one element in Philo's Greek education. The Sinai peninsula did not play a major role in considerations of Arabia in these authors or in any other Greco-Roman authors before the end of the first century. Usually the only places in the Sinai peninsula that attracted any attention at all were the cities along the coast. The rest of the Sinai peninsula appeared as vague *terra incognita* at the boundaries of Egypt and Arabia.[260] Hellenistic and Roman political and commercial interests in Arabia were dominated far more by the areas of "Arabia" east of the Sinai peninsula from the Transjordan south into the Arabian peninsula (cf. below).[261] Philo therefore probably did not have the Sinai peninsula in mind if he was using "Arabia" in the manner in which the word was used in the Alexandrian geographical tradition.

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[254] Cf. Philo *Jos.* 1.15; *Mos.* 1.47, 51, where Arabia and Arabs replace biblical Midian and Midianites.

[255] Cf. Gen. 16:11–12; 17:20; 25:1–18; 37:25–36; Judg. 8:22–24.

[256] Cf. Philo *Virt.* 34 for Midianite "Arabs" living in Transjordan just north of the Arabian peninsula.

[257] The bipartite division of Arabia was traditional and appears in Strabo, Pliny, Dioscurides, Appian, Cassius Dio, Ammianus, and others; MacAdam, "Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy of Alexandria," 289–320, esp. 305; G.W. Bowersock, "The Three Arabias in Ptolemy's Geography," *Géographie Historique au Proche-Orient (Syrie, Phénice, Arabie, grecques, romaines, byzantines)*, ed. Pierre-Louis Gatier, Bruno Helly, et Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, Notes et Monographies Techniques 23 (Paris 1988), 47–53. Bowersock points out that "Arabia Petraea" was a terminological innovation of Ptolemy in the second century.

Far less likely is that Philo was using the word "Arabia" for a political entity. By the middle of the first century it had become increasingly common to speak of the Nabatean kingdom as "Arabia."[262] Josephus, for example, consistently used the word "Arabia" to refer to the Nabatean kingdom.[263] He only referred to areas of Arabia Deserta when they coincided with Nabatean territory. Josephus explicitly used "Arabia Felix" when he wanted to refer to either the whole of the Arabian peninsula or the southern part of the Arabian peninsula.[264]

Unlike Josephus, Philo and other Greco-Roman authors did not live in close proximity to the pressing political realities of conflict between Judaea and the Nabatean kingdom. Greco-Roman interest in Arabia was dominated by the incense trade and other concerns that dictated that reference to "Arabia" was especially focused on Arabia Felix.[265] Strabo, writing a few decades before Philo, still does not know of the use of "Arabia" for a political entity. Strabo uses "Arabia" for the broad geographical region of which the Nabatean kingdom is only a small part.[266] Strabo simply refers to the territory of the Nabateans as "Nabataea."[267] In the middle of the first century CE the *Periplus of the Red Sea* used "Arabia" for the Arabian peninsula as a whole.[268] The phrase "Arabia Felix" (Εὐδαίμων Ἀραβία) was used in the *Periplus* to refer specifically to a city on the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula (modern Aden).[269] The *Periplus* only mentions the Nabateans briefly (*Periplus* 19.6.29) but provides a wealth of information about the trade between Egypt, southern Arabia, and India (*passim*). In the late first century CE Pliny still used "Arabia" to refer to both Arabia Deserta and the whole of the Arabian peninsula.[270] As late as the third century CE Dio Cassius felt the need to qualify his reference to the subjugation of the Nabatean kingdom in the time of Trajan by calling the Nabatean kingdom "the part of Arabia which is near Petra."[271]

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[258] Strabo 16.3.2–6 C765–67; 16.4.2–4 C767–769. Cf. MacAdam, "Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy of Alexandria," 297–305.

[259] Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1.525–552.

[260] Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen*, 44–74, esp. 74. E.g., Tacitus *Hist.* 5.6.1; Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 5.65; 5.68; 6.163–67.

[261] E.g., Strabo 16.3.1–17.1.1 C768–785, esp. 16.4.22–25 C778–783 and 16.4.27 C784. See especially the *Periplus* (*passim*).

[262] Cf. G.W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge 1983), 46.

[263] Diagnostic references to "Arabia" as a political unit corresponding to the Nabatean kingdom include *J.W.* 1.124, 125, 365, 385; *Ant.* 14.15; 16.220, 287, 297, 353 (!). For other references, see *J.W.* 1.89, 159, 181, 274, 276, 419, 583; 3.47 (cf. 1.89); 4.454, 482; 5.160; *Ant.* 4.82; 5.82; 9.191; 12.233; 13.117, 144, 179, 389, 391; 14.80, 121, 128, 362; 15.96, 111, [167]; 16.275, 280, 283, 340, 341, 347; 17.62, 63; 18.112; *Ap.* 1.133; 2.25.

[264] Arabia Felix is mentioned in Josephus *J.W.* 2.385; *Ant.* 1.239. In *Ant.* 8.179, Josephus uses only "Arabia" for Arabia Felix, but in this case he is simply following 2 Chron. 9:14. This may be the one exception, but he may not have understood the word in the way it was intended by the Chronicler.

Hence the term "Arabia" continued to refer to a huge geographical entity long after it began to be used of the relatively small Nabatean kingdom. In the first century CE the Nabatean kingdom included all of the former Midianite territory of northwestern Arabia and cities in northwestern Arabia east of the Red Sea that rivaled Petra in importance.[272] Thus even if Philo used the term "Arabia" to refer a political entity, it would be an entity that included large portions of both Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix.[273]

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[265] E.g., Strabo 16.4.22–25 C778–783; cf. 16.4.27 C784.

[266] Strabo 16.3.1–17.1.1 C768–785, esp. 16.4.22–25 C778–783 and 16.4.27 C784. Cf. MacAdam, "Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy of Alexandria," 295–301.

[267] Strabo 16.4.8 C777.

[268] *Periplus* 8.3.31; 19.6.30; 20.7.3–17; 36.12.8–10; possibly also 16.6.9–13. Cf. cognates in 7.3.13–14; 21.7.21; 25.8.13–20; 30.10.10; 33.11.16; 49.16.21.

[269] *Periplus* 26.8.21–32; 27.9.1; 57.18.30–19.2. For the identification with Aden, see Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, 158–59.

[270] Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 5.12.65, 5.14.68; 6.32.143; 6.32.147–62; 6.33.163–67. For a nuanced treatment, see MacAdam, "Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy of Alexandria," 290–95.

[271] Or possibly, "the Arabia which is near Petra"; Cassius Dio *Hist. Rom.* 68.14.5, which reads: "Πάλμας τῆς Συρίας ἄρχων τὴν Ἀραβίαν τὴν πρὸς τῇ Πέτρᾳ ἐχειρώσατο καὶ Ῥωμαίων ὑπήκοον ἐποιήσατο."

[272] E.g., Leuke Kome (modern ʿAynunah) and Hegra (modern Madaʾin Salih). Hegra was especially important because it underwent intensive development in the

Nothing suggests that Philo used "Arabia" to refer to the Nabatean kingdom. It is indisputable, however, that the Alexandrian traditions of Eratosthenes and Agatharchides preserved in Strabo were part of the context in which Philo used the term. These traditions surely provide the most accurate guide to the way Philo intended "Arabia" to be understood. Philo's apparent use of "Arabia" to refer to all of the desert territory inhabited by Arabs corresponds best to the traditional Alexandrian use of the term.

Philo's use of "Arabia" to identify the homeland of Zipporah therefore indicates that he believed that the experience of Moses at the burning bush occurred somewhere in the vast territory of Arabia Deserta or Arabia Felix (*Mos.* 1.47, 51–52, 63–66). But the scope of Philo's use of "Arabia" can be narrowed substantially by giving further consideration to the social context in which he used the term. Little evidence can be adduced to suggest that either Philo or his Alexandrian audience had much interest in the Sinai peninsula or the areas of Arabia Deserta east of Palestine. But it cannot be doubted that merchants, sailors, dock workers, shop owners, and almost everyone else in Alexandria shared a deep interest in the trade that passed from the southern Arabian peninsula through Alexandria to Rome.[274] For these individuals "Arabia" nearly always meant the Arabian peninsula (Arabia Felix). Philo's audience therefore probably would have envisioned a site somewhere in the Arabian peninsula when Philo described the flight of Moses to where Zipporah lived in "Arabia."

This is precisely the way in which Philo uses the term "Arabia" in his description of the Midianite traders who buy Joseph in *Jos.* 15

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early first century CE, apparently to provide a potential site for an alternative capital; Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 46–69. E.g., note the numerous Nabatean tombs in Hegra from the first century CE; Parr, Harding, Dayton, *et al.*, "Preliminary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968 [part 2]," 23. The Nabatean kingdom may have extended as far south as Al-ʿUla (ancient Dedan) by 106 CE; Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 95–97.

[273] MacAdam, "Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy of Alexandria," 298–300.

[274] Indispensable in this regard is the *Periplus of the Red Sea* (*passim*). The most important routes were by ship across the Red Sea, but other routes went by land through northwestern Arabia. Cf. Steven E. Sidebotham, "Ports of the Red Sea and the Arabia-India Trade," *L'Arabie Préislamique*, 195–223; also Lionel Casson, "South Arabia's Maritime Trade in the First Century AD," *L'Arabie Préislamique*, 187–94; Benjamin Isaac, "Trade Routes to Arabia and the Roman Presence in the Desert," *L'Arabie Préislamique*, 241–56.

(cf. Gen. 37:25–36 and Philo's equation of Midianites and Arabs in *Virt.* 34). Philo departs from both the MT and the LXX in using "Arabia" at this point. He explicitly assimilates the Midianite traders to contemporary Alexandrian trade practices when he identifies them as "some merchants among those who have the custom of carrying cargo from Arabia to Egypt." Probably the description of the "incense products, resin, and myrrh" carried by these traders in Gen. 37:25 LXX was what suggested this contemporary "custom" to Philo. In Philo's time one of the most important elements of the trade between Egypt and Arabia was the shipment to Egypt of aromatic products that were produced in the southern Arabian peninsula.[275] Philo's family itself seems to have been involved in trade in products from South Arabia.[276] The "custom" and the products implied in *Jos.* 15 clearly relate to the Arabian peninsula and have nothing to do with the Sinai peninsula.

These factors suggest that when Philo identified the Midianite Zipporah as an "Arab" and placed her home in "Arabia," his specific point of reference was a site in the Arabian peninsula. This site provided the backdrop for the revelation that Moses experienced at Mt. Sinai while shepherding the sheep of Zipporah's father (Philo *Mos.* 1.47, 51–66). This implies that Philo believed that Mt. Sinai was in the Arabian peninsula.

Philo clearly did not locate Mt. Sinai in the Sinai peninsula. In Exod. 3:18; 5:3; 8:23 (ET 8:27) mention is made of a journey of "three days into the desert." This figure does not correspond to the journey to Mt. Sinai actually taken by the Israelites in any preexilic tradition.[277] Philo understood this figure to refer to the distance along the most direct route between the border of Egypt and the border of Palestine (*Mos.* 1.73, 163–64).[278] But Philo affirms that a more indirect route was taken by the Israelites (*Mos.* 1.164, 181). Philo describes the long journey through the desert and the subsequent arrival of the Israelites at the borders of Canaan (*Mos.* 1.163–214). At this point they fight with the Amalekites, whom Philo identifies as "Phoenicians" living in the cities of Palestine (*Mos.* 1.214–220; cf. 1.163). Philo apparently believed that the Israelites had already traveled completely across the Sinai peninsula and had reached the southern edge of Palestine before this battle took place. In the biblical narrative, it is only after this battle that the Israelites reach Mt. Sinai (Exod. 17:8–16; 19:1–2). Because Philo follows the sequence of the biblical narrative, he apparently believed that the Israelites reached Mt. Sinai only after crossing the Sinai peninsula and reaching the southern edge of Palestine.

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[275] Sidebotham, "Ports of the Red Sea and the Arabia-India Trade," 209.

[276] *CPJ* 2.419a–e and notes, pp. 197–200; Alexander Fuks, "Notes on the Archive of Nicanor," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 5 (1951):207–216. The wheat was probably being shipped from Egypt to Arabia and India; cf. Sidebotham, "Ports of the Red Sea and the Arabia-India Trade," 209. Cf. *CPJ* 2.420a–b and notes, pp. 200–203.

[277] Contra Har-El, *Sinai Journeys*, 373, 423–24, who cites Exod. 3:18; 5:3; 8:23 (ET 8:27); 8:24 (ET 8:28); 15:22 ("16:22" is a mistake); Num. 33:8; and even Num. 10:33 (which is irrelevant to the distance of Mt. Sinai from Egypt). A tenuous argument could be made for an Israelite sanctuary at a distance of three days from Goshen on the basis of these verses. But these statements never mention Mt. Sinai (even in Exod. 3:18) and thus imply the existence of a tradition not associated with a journey to Mt. Sinai.

Philo therefore seems to have placed Mt. Sinai somewhere east of the Sinai peninsula and south of Palestine. Philo unfortunately omitted the visit of the Israelites to Mt. Sinai from his itinerary because he planned to give it a more detailed exposition in a later book (*Mos.* 2.66–173). But Philo depends so heavily upon the LXX/OG in all his writings that it is probable that he agreed with the LXX/OG in placing Mt. Sinai near "the city of Madiam (Madyan)" in the northwestern Arabian peninsula east of the Red Sea.[279] Philo states that Mt. Sinai was the highest of the mountains in the area in which it was located (*Mos.* 2.70). If indeed Philo placed Mt. Sinai near the city of Madyan, then he believed that Mt. Sinai was the highest mountain near this city.

Philo shows little interest in pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai or any other site along the route of the exodus. Philo's characteristic interests were expressed in the way that he dehistoricized the exodus into an allegory of the symbolic pilgrimage of the individual out of "Egypt," the domination of the body and its passions, and into a life of virtue, wisdom, and fellowship with God in the midst of the evils symbolized by the "Canaanites."[280]

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[278] It is difficult to know where Philo placed the boundaries of Egypt and Palestine. The distance of three days between the borders of Egypt and Palestine affirmed in Philo *Mos.* 1.73, 163–64 indicates that he did not follow Gen. 15:18 and Num. 34:5. These passages place the western boundary of Palestine at "the River of Egypt," but Philo understood this phrase to refer to the Nile; *Her.* 315–16; *Som.* 2.255–60. Philo may have placed the boundary of Palestine at Rhinocolura, Wadi el-Arish, or some other site in simple accommodation to currently recognized geographical or political boundaries. From Pelusium to Rhinocolura or Wadi el-Arish would make for a rather difficult but not impossible journey of three days; cf. the figures in Davies, "Significance," 89–97. Placing the boundary of Egypt at Casius rather than Pelusium would make for an easier journey of three days; cf. Strabo 16.2.26–34 C758–60.

[279] Cf. his use of "Madiam" in *Leg. All.* 12–13; *Agr.* 43; *Conf.* 55–57; *Mut.* 106–120, which all depend on the LXX, though none explicitly call Madiam a city as the LXX does.

D. *Early Post-Biblical Jewish Sources from Outside of Egypt*

1. *What has Alexandria to do with Jerusalem (or Anywhere Else)?*

The impact of Alexandrian traditions about Mt. Sinai on Jews in Palestine and in other regions is difficult to evaluate. Similarities between Alexandrian traditions and traditions about the location of Mt. Sinai in other regions may have resulted from the use of independent traditions that only coincidentally happened to be similar to the traditions that were known in Alexandria. In other cases similarities between Alexandrian and non-Alexandrian traditions may have resulted from shared use of a common source in older non-Alexandrian traditions. The author of *Jubilees*, Paul, and Josephus may all represent independent witnesses to Palestinian traditions concerning Mt. Sinai.

2. *Jubilees*

The oldest explicit statement about the location of Mt. Sinai in a post-biblical Jewish source from Palestine is *Jub.* 8:19. VanderKam has placed the composition of *Jubilees* between 161 and 140 BCE and probably between 161 and 152 BCE.[281] The tradition about the location of Mt. Sinai in *Jubilees* probably did not derive from an Alexandrian source. No certain evidence can be adduced in favor of the notion that the author of *Jubilees* made use of the LXX/OG.[282] In addition, the Hellenistic influence that appears in the geography of *Jubilees* comes from Ionian traditions that did not need to be mediated through Alexandrian sources.[283]

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[280] E.g., *Conf.* 77–82; *Mig.* 18, 23–30; *Her.* 78–82, 267–74; *Congr.* 83–88; *Som.* 2.255–58.

[281] James C. VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, HSM 14 (Missoula, MT 1977), 283–84.

[282] VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies*, 113–16.

[283] Gustav Hölscher, *Drei Erdkarten: Ein Beitrag zur Erdkenntnis des Hebräischen Altertums*,

The location of Mt. Sinai in *Jub.* 8:19 cannot be determined with certainty. Gustav Hölscher placed Mt. Sinai in the Sinai peninsula in his map of the *Jubilees* geography.[284] But Hölscher does not actually argue for this location. He seems to have just accepted the Christian tradition that identifies Mt. Sinai with a site in the Sinai peninsula. Nothing in *Jubilees* supports this identification.

The interpretation of the statement about the location of Mt. Sinai in *Jub.* 8:19 hinges upon the meaning of an obscure phrase that relates Mt. Sinai to the positions of the Garden of Eden and Mt. Zion. In the Ethiopic text of *Jub.* 8:19 these three sites are mentioned in the order (1) Garden of Eden; (2) Mt. Sinai; (3) Mt. Zion. The three sites are then said to be *zentu manṣara zentu.*[285] The preposition *manṣara* is from *naṣṣara,* which is a common verb for looking at or toward something. Hence the phrase used to express the relationship of the three sites to one another in *Jub.* 8:19 could be translated "this one looking at this one"; i.e., "one facing the other."[286]

This phrase unfortunately does not really clarify the relationship between the Garden of Eden, Mt. Sinai, and Mt. Zion. Does it imply that each of the three sites should be located at one of the angles of a triangle? Or does it mean that each of the three sites is located on a straight line, with the Garden of Eden at one end, Mt. Zion at the other end, and Mt. Sinai somewhere on the line in between the other two sites? The advantage of positing a triangular relationship is that a triangular relationship allows each site to face both of the other sites. But a triangular relationship does not allow any site to face directly toward either of the other two. A linear relationship allows the sites to face one another directly. But a linear orientation requires the site in the middle (Mt. Sinai) to have two faces that face in two opposite directions.

The difficulty in choosing between these two possibilities is exacerbated by the fact that the Ethiopic text is only a translation. The Ethiopic version derives from a Greek version that was itself a trans-

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Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse 1944/48, 3. Abhandlung (Heidelberg 1949), 57–73.

[284] Hölscher, *Drei Erdkarten*, 58; cf. 57–73.

[285] For the text, see James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text*, CSCO 510, Scriptores Aethiopici 87 (Lovain 1989), 54.

[286] Cf. James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, CSCO 511, Scriptores Aethiopici 88 (Lovain 1989), 53, who translates the sentence, "The three of them—the one facing the other—were created as holy (places)."

lation from an original Hebrew version.[287] Unfortunately *Jub.* 8:19 is not among the preserved fragments of the Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, or Latin versions of *Jubilees*.[288] Our only access to the original text is through the two layers of translation and interpretation that have been interposed between the original text and the text as it is preserved in Ethiopic. This leaves open a wide variety of options for the reading of the original Hebrew text. The Hebrew original may have said that the three sites were *neged* ("opposite" or "in front of") one another, *liphney* ("before," "facing," or "in front of") one another, *'al-peney* ("facing" or "in front of") one another, *qedem* ("in front of" or even successively "east of") one another, *'el-mul* ("in front of" or "opposite") one another, or in some other relationship to each other. Some of these options could imply that the sites were either in a triangular relationship or were placed successively one after the other in a straight line. Thus the Hebrew original may have possessed the same ambiguity that appears in the Ethiopic text.

This ambiguity is only partially relieved by an analysis of the larger geographical relationships implied in the *Jubilees* geography. The location of Mt. Zion in "the navel of the earth" can easily be identified with Jerusalem (*Jub.* 8:19; cf. Ezek. 5:5; 38:12). The Garden of Eden, which is in the "land of Eden," seems to be located on the southern and eastern borders of Shem's territory (*Jub.* 8:12–17, 21–23). The southwestern edge of the Garden of Eden is not far from the Nile River ("Gihon River"; *Jub.* 8:15–16, 22–23; cf. Josephus *Ant.* 1.39). The Garden of Eden extends eastward to "the land of the Erythrean Sea" and the "land of the east" in India (*Jub.* 8:16, 21; 9:2). For the author of *Jubilees* the "Erythrean Sea" ("Red Sea") was a large and almost mythical sea in the east that included the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean on the west of India (*Jub.* 8:21; 9:2, 4).[289]

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[287] Vanderkam, *Textual and Historical Studies*, 1–18.

[288] For a list of manuscripts and fragments of versions, see VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees* (translation volume; i.e., CSCO 511), 6–31.

[289] Cf. O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," *OTP* 2.74, note 9d; Hölscher, *Drei Erdkarten*, 58, 63–65. Hölscher emphasizes mythological influence on the geography of *Jubilees* at this point, which suggests that the Erythrean Sea was conceived as a vast eastern sea complementary to the Mediterranean on the west. But nothing supports Hölscher's separate placement of the Arabian Gulf (the modern Red Sea), which might have been included in the Erythrean Sea. Cf. the later *Periplus*, which has a far better understanding of geography but nonetheless uses the phrase "Erythrean Sea" ("Red Sea") to refer to the large body of water around the Arabian peninsula, including the modern Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the western Indian Ocean; Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, 94. See *Periplus* 1.1.1; 20.7.4; 38.12.24.

The association between "the land of the Erythrean Sea" and "the land of the east" in India suggests that the "the land of the Erythrean Sea" referred to the eastern part of the Arabian peninsula near India. If the eastern part of the Garden of Eden extended to "the land of the Erythrean Sea" and India, the eastern border of the Garden of Eden must be placed somewhere along the Persian Gulf near the Indian Ocean. Thus the Garden of Eden stretched from a point near the Nile river on the southwest of the garden to a point near the Persian Gulf on the east or northeast of the garden.

This makes it difficult to avoid the impression that for the author of *Jubilees* the Garden of Eden coincided with southern Arabia (modern Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and southeastern Saudi Arabia). The eastern coast of Africa east of the Nile also might have been included in the land of Eden (*Jub.* 8:16, 22–23). This would reflect the common Hellenistic notion that the peoples of both the Arabian peninsula and the eastern coast of Africa were from the same ethnic stock (cf. discussion above). Even if the author identified the Garden of Eden with a mythical region outside of human habitation, the geographical associations of this region would place it not far from southern Arabia. The imagery of the rich incense territory of southern Arabia probably contributed to the mythology of *Jubilees* at this point.[290]

If the Garden of Eden corresponds to southern Arabia in *Jubilees*, the author of *Jubilees* must have believed that southern Arabia was east of Palestine. This conclusion follows from the location of the Garden of Eden in *Jubilees*. As Hölscher recognized, *Jubilees* implies that the Garden of Eden was located east or slightly southeast of Palestine.[291] Hölscher is probably correct in suggesting that the Nile River on the south of the Garden of Eden was thought to be parallel to the Don ("Tina") River in the north, which flows along an east-west course (*Jub.* 8:15–16, 21–23).[292] In *Jubilees* the upper Nile River valley, like the Don River valley, follows an east-west course rather than a north-south course (*Jub.* 8:15–16, 22). The east-west orientation of the course of the upper Nile River valley is confirmed in *Jub.* 9:1, where the territory of the upper Nile River valley identified with Cush (Ethiopia) is placed east of Egypt rather than south of Egypt. This created a convenient series of natural borders between the territories assigned to Noah's sons: Japeth's territory was north of the Don River; Ham's territory was south of the Nile River; and Shem's territory was in "the middle of the earth" between the two rivers (*Jub.* 8:12, 22, 25, 30). The description of these territorial allotments in *Jubilees* implies that the upper Nile River extends eastward for a considerable distance before it reaches the southwestern border of the Garden of Eden (*Jub.* 8:15–16, 22–23; 9:1). The Garden of Eden was placed near the eastern and southeastern portion of Shem's territory between the Don and the Nile rivers, near India and the Persian Gulf (*Jub.* 8:15–16, 21; 9:2). The Garden of Eden was therefore far to the east and southeast of Palestine.

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[290] This also seems to be the case in *1 Enoch* 28:1–32:6, though the geography there is slightly different and much more pervasively mythologized. Cf. *Periplus* 26.8.21–32; 27.9.1; 57.18.30–19.2; which identify Arabia Felix (Εὐδαίμων Ἀραβία; "happy" because of its wealth) with a specific city in southwestern Arabia (modern Aden); Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, 158–59.

[291] Hölscher, *Drei Erdkarten*, 58.

[292] Hölscher, *Drei Erdkarten*, 66.

This raises a number of possibilities for explaining the location of Mt. Sinai in *Jub.* 8:19. If the spatial relationship between Mt. Zion, Mt. Sinai, and the Garden of Eden in *Jub.* 8:19 consists of three points located on a straight line, then Mt. Sinai would have to be placed east or southeast of Palestine somewhere between Mt. Zion and the Garden of Eden. This would probably fix the location of Mt. Sinai somewhere in the northern Arabian peninsula. If the relationship between the three sites in *Jub.* 8:19 is that of an equilateral triangle with each site at one of the angles, Mt. Sinai would have to be at a point either northeast or southeast of Mt. Zion at equal distances from both Mt. Zion and the Garden of Eden. Locating Mt. Sinai at a point southeast of Mt. Zion is more likely than a point northeast of Mt. Zion because the author of *Jubilees* certainly knew the biblical tradition that the Israelites entered Palestine from the south. Thus if the relationship between the three sites in *Jub.* 8:19 is that of an equilateral triangle, this would fix the location of Mt. Sinai somewhere in the Arabian peninsula, perhaps near its middle. If the relationship between the three sites in *Jub.* 8:19 is triangular but not that of an equilateral triangle, the location of Mt. Sinai in *Jubilees* cannot be determined at all.

A potential parallel in *1 Enoch* may be adduced in favor of the position that *Jub.* 8:19 locates Mt. Sinai in northern Arabia east or southeast of Palestine. In *1 Enoch* 26:1–5, Enoch journeys to a "holy mountain" located in what appears to be a mythical Jerusalem. In *1 Enoch* 28:1–29:2, he travels from this mountain eastward until he arrives at a mountain in the desert.[293] The mountain in the desert has a stream gushing forth from on top of it that is reminiscent of the "rock on Horeb" from which water flowed during the exodus (Exod. 17:6). In the next stage of Enoch's journey, described in *1 Enoch* 30:1–32:6, Enoch travels eastward over other mountains and beyond the Erythrean Sea until he arrives at the Garden of Eden. Since the "Erythrean Sea" is here located well to the east of Jerusalem, it probably includes the Persian Gulf and the western part of the Indian Ocean as it does in *Jubilees*.

Enoch's journey in *1 Enoch* 26:1–32:6 thus appears to proceed along a straight line that moves eastward from Mt. Zion to Mt. Sinai to the Garden of Eden. The description of Enoch's journey in *1 Enoch* was almost certainly known to the author of Jubilees (cf. *Jub.* 4:16–28; 5:1–11). This would offer important evidence for the notion that *Jub.* 8:19 locates Mt. Sinai on a line between Mt. Zion and the Garden of Eden in the east. The major obstacle to this interpretation is that Enoch's mountain in the desert is not explicitly identified with Mt. Sinai. In addition, the setting of Enoch's journey is an apocalyptic vision with mythological distortions even more elaborate than those that appear in *Jubilees*. The mountain in the desert in *1 Enoch* may not have been intended to represent Mt. Sinai at all.[294]

The position in which the author of *Jubilees* located Mt. Sinai therefore cannot be determined with certainty. The author of *Jubilees* may have located Mt. Sinai at some point on a line extending south or east from Jerusalem into southern or eastern Arabia. This at least leaves open the possibility that he identified Mt. Sinai with a site in northwestern Arabia.

Nothing in *Jubilees* implies the practice of pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai. Mt. Sinai was clearly associated with Semitic identity through being set apart as the unique possession of Shem and his Semitic descendants (*Jub.* 4:26; 8:18–19). For the author of *Jubilees* this mountain was more specifically associated with Jewish identity because it was the place on which God had established a covenant with the Israelites and their descendants (*Jub.* 1:1–11). But the close relationship that this implied between Jews and Mt. Sinai did not rest on the assumption that any Jews in the post-biblical period had ever visited Mt. Sinai. Mt. Sinai, like the Garden of Eden, was a mythical place whose precise location was only visited by legendary heroes such as Enoch, Moses, and their contemporaries (*Jub.* 1:1–6; 4:22–26). Like the Garden of Eden, the value of Mt. Sinai as a "holy place" was in no way affected by whether or not it was possible to visit the site (*Jub.* 4:26; 8:19).

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[293] The "mountain" is not mentioned in the extant Greek version according to Ephraim Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," *OTP* 1.27 note b on *1 Enoch* 28:1. If this represents the original text, any reference to this text at all in my argument would be highly problematic.

[294] Cf. *1 Enoch* 24:1–25:3, which describes an eschatological mountain that is perhaps more similar to Mt. Sinai than the mountain in the desert in 28:1–3.

The author of *Jubilees* still may have had a specific location in mind when he mentioned the location of Mt. Sinai in *Jub.* 8:19. But he clearly emphasized the transfer of Mt. Sinai from the realm of pilgrimage and other concrete historical experiences into the realm of myth. Emphasis on the transfer of Mt. Sinai from the realm of historical experience to the realm of myth was essential for the centralization in Jerusalem of the Jewish festivals related to the exodus. Unfortunately, the removal of the Jewish experience of Mt. Sinai from the realm of concrete historical contact with the mountain itself made it easy for Byzantine Christian tradition to rehistoricize the experience of Mt. Sinai in a location in the Sinai peninsula that was never associated with Mt. Sinai in earlier Jewish tradition.

3. *Paul*

The next explicit statement about the location of Mt. Sinai in a Jewish text from outside of Alexandria comes from a text written two centuries after the composition of the book of *Jubilees.* This statement appears in one of the letters of Paul, all of which are simultaneously both Jewish and Christian texts. Paul certainly could have been influenced by Alexandrian traditions in his statements about the location of Mt. Sinai. All of his major letters include allusions to or direct quotations from the LXX/OG. He also was aware of literary and exegetical traditions that may have come from Alexandrian sources.[295] But Paul also received training in traditions that may have paralleled or ultimately predated the Jewish traditions known in Alexandria (Acts 22:3; Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:5–6). Thus it is impossible to know the source from which Paul learned about the site that he identified with Mt. Sinai.

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[295] E.g., cf. Wis. 11:15–13:9 with Rom. 1:18–2:16; cf. Philo's allegorical method with Gal. 4:21–31; and note Paul's relationship with the Alexandrian Jew Apollos (1 Cor. 16:12; cf. Acts 18:24–19:1).

Paul provides one of the few probable examples of early Jewish pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai. In Gal. 1:16–17 Paul states that after his revelation of Jesus he went away to Arabia. The purpose of this journey has often been attributed to Paul's missionary interests. But arguments made in favor of this interpretation are nothing more than inferences from Paul's practice in later years.[296] Both the immediate context of Gal. 1:16–17 and the verses themselves indicate that Paul's goal was to acquire further revelation from God. The meaning of Gal. 1:17 can only be, "But I went away into Arabia to consult with God." The omission of the words "to consult with God" (προσανατίθεσθαι τῷ θεῷ) is a simple case of ellipsis.

Points in favor of this interpretation include the following. (1) The entire context is overwhelmingly dominated by Paul's concern with demonstrating that his message came by revelation from God, not human beings (cf. Gal. 1:1–2:10). (2) The ellipsis of "to consult with God" in Gal. 1:17 is consistent with Paul's style.[297] (3) An ellipsis that directly parallels the ellipsis of "to consult with God" already appears in the first half of Gal. 1:17. Paul states that he did not "consult with flesh and blood" in 1:16 (οὐ προσανεθέμην σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι). He then states that he also did not go up to the apostles in Jerusalem. The obvious implication, which was omitted by ellipsis, was that he did not go to these apostles "to consult with them" (προσανατίθεσθαι αὐτοῖς). A clear structural parallelism between this clause and the clause in which Paul described his visit to Arabia was established by the opening phrases in each clause (οὐδε ἀνῆλθον ... ἀλλὰ ἀπῆλθον). The ellipsis in the second clause must therefore parallel the ellipsis in the first.[298] (4) The strong contrast set up by "but"

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[296] Nothing explicitly said in Galatians, the book of Acts, or any other early source provides even a wisp of solid evidence for a purported mission trip to Arabia. E.g., Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia 1979), 73–74, can only give a lengthy ethnography of Arabia to support the notion of a mission to Arabia. Likewise, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Paul in Arabia," *CBQ* 55 (1993):732–37, states that Paul's activity in Arabia included preaching because Paul must have returned to Damascus fleeing persecution provoked by his preaching. Murphy-O'Connor bases this on the fact that Paul was persecuted in Damascus three years after he had returned from his visit to Arabia (Gal. 1:17–18; 2 Cor. 11:32–33). Events of three years later and Paul's even later patterns of missionary activity certainly do not justify ignoring what Gal. 1:16–17 itself suggests about the purpose of his visit to Arabia.

[297] See examples in BDF § 479–83.

[298] The parallelism continues into the next verse as well, with a slight modification in the infinitive (Ἔπειτα ... ἀνῆλθον ... ἱστορῆσαι). This suggests a resolution to the vexing problem of the meaning of ἱστορῆσαι in 1:18, which would imply that

(ἀλλά) in Gal. 1:17 indicates that the journey into Arabia must be contrasted with both "consulting with flesh and blood" (1:16) and "going up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me" to consult with them (1:17). This contrast requires resolution by an identification of the one with whom Paul did consult. The context was so dominated by his concern to emphasize that he had received revelation from God that the identity of the one with whom he consulted did not need to be stated. (5) The ellipsis is easily explained by the same reticence about describing personal revelations that motivates Paul to shift into the third person in 2 Cor. 12:1–7. Analogy with 2 Cor. 12:1–7 is especially relevant because it occurs in a polemical context similar to Gal. 1:17. (6) Psychological speculation can be dangerous. But one can understand that Paul's vision on the road to Damascus may have created such cognitive dissonance that he felt a need to acquire additional revelation to reinterpret his "earlier conduct in the Jewish way of life" (Gal. 1:13–14). (7) Journeys to desert regions to receive divine revelation were a common practice in ancient Judaism.

Jews in the Second Temple period often made personal "vision quests" into the desert in a conscious effort to follow the pattern established by the experiences of Moses and Elijah on Mt. Sinai.[299] Some of the typical features of Native American vision quests, such as fasting and solitude, were firmly associated with visionary experiences in both Philo and Jewish apocalyptic tradition.[300] In some cases individual Jewish vision quests into the desert may have involved an actual pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai. In *Apoc. Abr.* 12:1–3 the pattern of Moses and Elijah is made explicit in the description of a journey that Abraham took to Mt. Horeb to receive divine revelation. The deliberate assimilation of Abraham to this pattern suggests that the text may have been produced in a group that advocated pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai to obtain visionary revelations. Jewish traditions associated with vision quests to Mt. Sinai may have continued in later Christian circles (5 Ezra 2:33).

Paul went "to get information from Peter." Even if Paul only went "to become acquainted with Peter," Paul and Peter certainly did not just talk about the weather.

[299] E.g., 4 Ezra 14:1–9; Matt. 4:1–11 and parallels; Matt. 16:1–8 and parallels; *Apoc. Zeph.* 3:2.

[300] E.g., Philo *Mos.* 2.67–70; Dan. 9:3, 20–23; 10:2–3; 4 Ezra 3:1; 5:19–20; 6:30–32, 35; 9:23–27; 12:40–51; 13:57–58; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 5:6–7; 9:1–2; 12:5; 20:5–21:2; *Apoc. Abr.* 12:1–3; 13:4; cf. Josephus *Life* 10–12. Cf. Richard Erdoes and Alfonso

Paul's journey into the deserts of Arabia therefore followed a tradition of making vision quests into the desert based on the pattern of Moses and Elijah. The odd choice of "Arabia" as the site of Paul's vision quest can most easily be explained if Paul followed this pattern to such a degree that he even made an actual visit to Mt. Sinai.[301] This point would be decisively confirmed if Paul were the author of the statement locating Mt. Sinai in "Arabia" only a few chapters later in the same book (Gal. 4:25; but see below).

Paul does not qualify the term "Arabia" in Gal. 1:17, however, so one cannot be sure precisely where his vision quest to Mt. Sinai took him. The word "Arabia" certainly does not refer to Provincia Arabia or Arabia Petraea because these phrases refer to areas delimited only in the second century CE.[302] The reference to the Nabatean king "Aretas" (Aretas IV) in 2 Cor. 11:32 is also completely irrelevant to the question of Paul's use of "Arabia" in Gal. 1:17.[303] The reference to Aretas is simply part of a statement about the local administration of Damascus three years after Paul's journey to "Arabia."[304] It tells nothing about Paul's actions three years earlier. The meaning of "Arabia" must be determined by the social and historical context in which it was used in Gal. 1:17.

Like Josephus, Paul had once lived in Palestine, where Nabateans and other Arab peoples from the surrounding desert regions played an important role in local politics. Thus Paul may have used the word "Arabia" for the Nabatean kingdom. But the use of "Arabia" for the Nabatean kingdom would not eliminate the ambiguity in

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Ortiz, *American Indian Myths and Legends* (New York 1984), 69–72; Robert H. Lowie, *Indians of the Plains*, Anthropological Handbook 1 (New York 1954), 157–61.

[301] Correctly, J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London 1890), 87–90.

[302] Contra Betz, *Galatians* 73–74, reference to the Roman province of Arabia is impossible at the time when Paul wrote Galatians in the 50s. Nabatean Arabia may have been temporarily annexed as a province from 3 BCE to 1 CE, but its history as a Roman province only became permanent when it was annexed by Trajan in 106 CE; Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 54–57, 76–89. Likewise contra Murphy-O'Connor, "Paul in Arabia," 732–33, "Arabia Petraea" is anachronistic. This phrase was a terminological innovation of Ptolemy in the second century CE and does not correspond to the actual political boundaries of the Nabatean kingdom in the first century; MacAdam, "Strabo, Pliny the Elder, and Ptolemy," 305–314, following Bowersock, "Three Arabias in Ptolemy's Geography," 47–53. Contra Murphy-O'Connor, p. 733, Josephus *Ant.* 18.109 does not use the phrase "Arabia Petraea."

[303] Contra Murphy-O'Connor, "Paul in Arabia," 733–37.

[304] Paul's statement implies that Aretas IV was able to regain brief control over Damascus; Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 68–69.

Gal. 1:17 if this is what Paul intended in this verse. As was stated above, the Nabatean kingdom in the first century included large portions of both Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix.

Paul's usage of "Arabia" also may have been conditioned by his audience in Asia Minor. Paul's letters provide abundant evidence of his ability to adapt his own language and imagery to the language and imagery of his audience.[305] Paul probably was aware that his audience in Galatia probably would not have understood the word "Arabia" as a reference to the Nabatean kingdom. His audience was accustomed to the predominantly geographical use of the term found in popular Greco-Roman authors such as Eratosthenes, Agatharchides, Artemidorus, Strabo, and others who have been discussed above. Paul thus may have used "Arabia" in Gal. 1:17 in the same broad sense in which Philo and ancient geographers used the term. In this sense the term would have included all of the vast desert region south and east of Palestine (both Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix). This use of the term might be narrowed further if Paul took into account the frequent use of the term to refer to the place from which incense and other products of the Arabian peninsula were imported into Galatia. In this case "Arabia" would refer specifically to "Arabia Felix" in Gal. 1:17. This possibility is unfortunately difficult to evaluate given the brevity of Paul's description of his visit to Arabia in this verse.

Two conclusions about pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai may be derived from Gal. 1:17: (1) Paul probably made a vision quest to Mt. Sinai; and (2) Paul probably located Mt. Sinai somewhere in "Arabia," which probably includes the Arabian peninsula (though it cannot be determined whether the term should actually be limited to this region in this case). In both of these respects Paul represented a broader Jewish tradition. Paul certainly had read the LXX/OG and probably was aware of other sources like those from Alexandria that located Mt. Sinai in the northwestern Arabian peninsula. But whether he agreed with these sources in locating Mt. Sinai near the city of Madyan cannot be determined.

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[305] E.g., the use of "mystery" in 1 Cor. 2:1, 7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; the reference to the Isthmian games in 1 Cor. 9:24–27; the imagery of an imperial *adventus* in 1 Thess. 4:16; the references to the military in Phil. 1:13 and 2:25, which were addressed to Christians in a city with a large population of retired veterans and their descendants.

4. *Paul or Paul's Interpolator in Gal. 4:25a*

Additional testimony to the Jewish tradition of locating Mt. Sinai in Arabia appears in Gal. 4:25 in what appears to be either an interpolation or a parenthetical statement from Paul himself. The recent Nestle-Aland edition of the text (NA^{27}), like previous editions, includes Gal. 4:25a. The text of Gal. 4:25a in the NA^{27} states, "But (or 'Now'; δὲ) 'Hagar' is Mount Sinai in Arabia."

Scholars who have accepted the inclusion of the word "Hagar" in this verse have speculated that in Gal. 4:25a Paul was providing a justification for his allegory by making a pun or an etymological argument based on the word "Hagar."[306] Hartmut Gese, for example, suggested that Paul was alluding to "Hegra," a Nabatean city in northwestern Arabia next to the volcanic mountain Hala' l-Badr.[307] Gese's argument was adduced to support Jean Koenig's attempt to identify Hala' l-Badr with Mt. Sinai and was quickly adopted by Koenig himself.[308] Paul Maiberger argued that in ancient Arabic both "Hagar" and "Sina" (= Sinai) meant "stone."[309] Maiberger asserted that Paul was noting the synonymous relationship between these words as the basis of his allegory. This argument played a key role in Maiberger's attempt to explain the origins of the tradition identifying Jebel Musa with Mt. Sinai. Martin McNamara argued that Paul was making an allusion to the region of Petra through reference to the nearby town of Hagar (Halutsa) and Petra's Nabatean inhabitants, who were identified with the descendants of Hagar in contemporary Jewish tradition.[310] McNamara points out that the identification of Petra with Kadesh in ancient Jewish tradition might suggest that Paul was inspired by a tradition of locating Mt. Sinai near Kadesh or somewhere else east of the Aravah. Others have proposed similar arguments.[311]

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[306] Cf. Maiberger, *Untersuchungen*, 73–82, esp. 74, 77–82.

[307] Hartmut Gese, "Τὸ δὲ ʽΑγὰρ Σινὰ ὄρος ἔστὶν ἐν τῇ ʼΑραβία (Gal. 4:25)," *Das Ferne und Nahe Wort: Festschrift Leonhard Rost zur Vollendung Seines 70. Lebensjahres am 30. November 1966 Gewidmet*, ed. Fritz Maass, BZAW 105 (Berlin 1967), 81–94. Neither allegory nor a pun requires exact transliteration, contra G.I. Davies, "Hagar, el-Hegra and the Location of Mount Sinai," *VT* 22 (1972):152–63. Cf. Knauf, *Midian*, 57. But Gese's etymological argument is unnecessary for explaining Paul's allegory; cf. below.

[308] Cf. Jean Koenig, *Le site de Al-Jaw dans l'ancient Pays de Madian* (Paris 1971), 102.

[309] Maiberger, *Untersuchungen*, 80–82. Knauf, *Midian*, 57, note 284, dismisses this as "gegenstandslos." Philo, whose allegorical approach provides the closest parallels to Paul at this point, allegorizes "Sinai" based on both the Hebrew and Greek versions of Exod. 3:2, but knows nothing of an Arabic etymology; cf. Philo *QExod* 45 (on Exod. 24:16a) and notes in LCL edition; *Fug.* 161–63.

[310] Martin McNamara, "'*To de (Hagar) Sina oros estin en te Arabia*' (Gal. 4:25a): Paul and Petra," *Milltown Studies* 2 (Spring 1978), 24–41.

At least two (and possibly three) problems apply to all interpretations of this nature.

First, the word "Hagar" should not be included in Gal. 4:25a in the first place. As is sometimes recognized in contemporary scholarship, Gal. 4:25a simply reads, "But (or: 'Of course') Sinai is a mountain in Arabia."[312] This point will be elaborated more fully below. The omission of "Hagar" from Gal. 4:25a does not eliminate the possibility of some type of play on the word "Hagar" in Gal. 4:24 or throughout Paul's argument as a whole. But the absence of the word "Hagar" from Gal. 4:25a requires that this statement itself be understood as a straightforward affirmation of the geographical location of Mt. Sinai. The verse simply states that Mt. Sinai is located in Arabia.

Second, interpretations that assume that Gal. 4:25a is providing additional justification for Paul's allegory fail to do justice to the sequence of Paul's argument. Paul has already sufficiently established the basis for the allegory of Hagar and Sarah in Gal. 4:21–23. In 4:24a Paul clearly signals that he is done with providing the grounds for his allegory and intends to move into the actual elaboration of the allegory. This is precisely what he does in 4:24b to 4:31. The clear transition in 4:24a makes it unlikely that 4:25a was itself intended as a pun, an argument from the etymology of "Hagar," or any other kind of additional justification for the allegory. Any additional justification for the equation of Hagar and Sinai was superfluous, especially for ancient readers accustomed to allegorical exegesis. Before arriving at 4:24–31 Paul had already established a contrast between the two covenants (one of which obviously comes from Mt. Sinai; 3:15–19). He also had already associated these covenants with freedom and slavery (3:29–4:11). He had already identified one covenant with the children of the free woman who, like Isaac, are "heirs according to promise" (3:18, 29; 4:1–7). He had already established the contrast between the free woman and the slave woman (who in the context is obviously Hagar; 4:22–23). He had already emphasized that the contrast between the two women results in a contrast between the freedom and slavery of the children that they bear (4:22–23). The equation of "Hagar," "slavery," and "Sinai" was therefore already implied in Galatians before it was made explicit in 4:24b. The truly "new" element introduced in the allegory is the notion of two kinds of Jerusalem and its implications, not the equation of Hagar and Sinai. Paul hardly needed to add a tenuous appeal to an obscure and extraneous etymology in 4:25a to justify an equation that simply epitomized what had already been carefully argued for the preceding two chapters.

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[311] E.g., Michael G. Steinhauser, "Gal. 4,25a: Evidence of Targumic Tradition in Gal. 4,21–31," *Bib* 70 (1989):234–40.

[312] Correctly, Franz Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief*, HTKNT 9 (Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 1974), 322–25; Mussner, "Hagar, Sinai, Jerusalem: zum Text von Gal. 4,25a," *TQ* 135 (1955):56–60. Mussner argues that the verse is a Pauline parenthesis introduced as a qualification to emphasize that Paul's interpretation of "Sinai" was strictly for the sake of the allegory; cf. below. Only slightly different is the reading followed in the *Jerusalem Bible* produced by Ecole Biblique (which omits "Hagar" but assumes γάρ instead of δέ). Unfortunately the omission of "Hagar" is rarely even noted as an alternative in the margins of most modern translations.

This does not eliminate the possibility that a pun on the word "Hagar" was one of the many elements that may have informed the argument developed in Galatians 3:15–5:1. But Gal. 4:25a was not an explicit statement of a pun of this nature.

Interpretations that suggest that Gal. 4:25a is providing additional justification for Paul's allegory might even face a third obstacle that would ultimately prove fatal to any attempt to use Gal. 4:25a to explain where Paul located Mt. Sinai. This is that Gal. 4:25a possibly should not be included in the text at all.[313]

The reading of Gal. 4:25 in the NA^{27} cannot be the original reading of the text.[314]

(1) On one point the NA^{27} is probably correct. This is that the manuscripts that read δέ ("But") in Gal. 4:25a preserve a reading older than those that read γάρ ("For"). The editors of the NA^{27} chose δέ because of its "superior attestation" over γάρ in the manuscripts

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[313] This was suggested three centuries ago by Richard Bentley, though he later seems to have modified his position; Arthur Ayres Ellis, *Bentleii Critica Sacra: Notes on the Greek and Latin Text of the New Testament, Extracted from the Bentley Mss. in Trinity College Library* (Cambridge 1862), 45–47, 108; cf. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, 193.

[314] The following discussion is primarily based on the variants in the UBS^{4} and the NA^{27}, but some witnesses in the discussion of the participle (ἡ συστοιχοῦσα) were supplied by Constantius Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (2 vols; Graz [1869–1872], 1965). In each case in which I have listed the witnesses to various readings the witnesses listed are those provided in the critical apparatuses of these editions under the verse cited.

and versions.[315] The witnesses for γάρ include ℵ C F G it$^{\text{ar, b, f, g, o, r}}$ vg eth geo^{1} Origen$^{\text{lat}}$ (Epiphanius) Cyril$^{1/2/3}$ Victorinus-Rome Jerome Pelagius Augustine *et al.* The witnesses for δέ include *p*46 A B D$^{\text{gr}}$ vg$^{\text{mss}}$ syr$^{\text{h(mg), pal}}$ cop$^{\text{sa, bo(pt)}}$ Hesychius$^{\text{lat}}$ Ambrosiaster *et al.* Both traditions seem to have attained a wide geographical distribution at an early date. But the earliest manuscript witness supporting δέ (*p*46; ca. 200 CE) is certainly earlier than the earliest manuscript witness supporting γάρ (ℵ; 4th century). The assumed γάρ in the Latin translation of Origen may have resulted from the influence of the strong Latin tradition of reading γάρ (as attested in the witnesses to γάρ) on Origen's translator or copyist(s). Perhaps just as important as the manuscript evidence is the difficulty of understanding why any scribe would change γάρ to δέ in this passage if γάρ were the original reading. The δέ ("But" or "Now") at the beginning of 4:25 is disruptive to the syntax and flow of the argument. It also introduces an element of confusion because it interrupts the μέν ... δέ construction in 4:24, 26. The γάρ tradition found in some witnesses to Gal. 4:25a can be explained as an attempt to smooth out the disruptive syntax and confusion created by δέ. The tradition with δέ probably represents the original reading.

(2) Second, the manuscript tradition that does not have "Hagar" in 4:25a has to be older than the tradition that includes it. Standard critical editions include "Hagar" based on the rationale cited by Metzger: "After γάρ had replaced δέ in some witnesses, the juxtaposition of γὰρ Ἁγάρ led to the accidental omission sometimes of γάρ and sometimes of Ἁγάρ."[316] This explanation fails to convince because it does not explain the early witnesses that read or assume δέ but also omit Ἁγάρ (*p*46 vg$^{\text{mss}}$ cop$^{\text{sa}}$ Hesychius$^{\text{lat}}$ Ambrosiaster). This includes *p*46 (ca. 200 CE), which is the oldest witness to the text in any form. It is rather difficult to offer any convincing explanation for why a scribe would omit "Hagar" if it were the original reading. But if the scribe's exemplar of 4:25a stated, "Sinai is a mountain in Arabia," it would be easy to understand why he or she would be tempted to alter this statement. Such a bald geographical statement is intrusive in a context devoted to constructing an allegory.

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[315] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament* (3rd ed.; New York 1975), 596. Metzger's comments were designed for the UBS^{3}, but the committees and texts of the UBS^{3}, the UBS^{4}, the NA^{26}, and the NA^{27} are almost identical.

[316] Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 596.

The scribe could have easily added "Hagar" from 4:24 to tie 4:25a more closely to its context. The addition of "Hagar" to an original that did not have it can be explained much more easily than its omission from an original that did have it.

The reading "Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia" in 4:25a is also inescapably redundant. It merely repeats what was already stated in 4:24b. This repetition was unnecessary because, as stated above, Paul had already implied a close relationship between Hagar and Sinai even before it was made explicit in 4:24b. The equations in 4:24b and 4:25a take a slightly different form, but the end result in both cases is approximately the same. The addition of "in Arabia" to 4:25a does not fundamentally alter the basic equation of Hagar and Sinai stated in the main clause of 4:25a. It is the awareness of this redundancy that has led scholars to seek truly new information in 4:25a, such as a pun or an etymology that would provide additional justification for Paul's allegory. But as stated above, the clear transition in 4:24a makes it unlikely that 4:25a was intended to provide any new information that would justify Paul's allegory. Genuinely new information (though not additional justification for the allegory) is presented in 4:25a only if it is read without "Hagar." In this case the new information takes the form of a simple geographical observation: "Sinai is a mountain in Arabia."

The manuscript evidence alone is sufficient to make a cogent argument for the secondary nature of "Hagar." The word "Hagar" does appear in A B D syr$^{\text{p, h (and h mg), pal}}$ cop$^{\text{sa, bo(mss)}}$ arm geo^{2} Chrysostom Theodore$^{\text{lat}}$ Cyril$^{1/3}$ *et al.* This indicates that the reading with "Hagar" was widely known in the east by the fourth century. But the word "Hagar" does not appear in the earliest witnesses (including *p*46; ca. 200 CE). The reading without "Hagar" is also geographically widely attested before the reading with "Hagar" had become popular outside the east. "Hagar" is not found in *p*46 ℵ C F G it$^{\text{ar, b, g, o, r}}$ vg$^{\text{mss}}$ cop$^{\text{sa}}$ eth geo^{1} Origen$^{\text{lat}}$ (Epiphanius) Cyril$^{2/3}$ Victorinus-Rome Hesychius$^{\text{lat}}$ Ambrosiaster Jerome Pelagius Augustine. The word "Hagar" was probably not in the original text of Gal. 4:25a.

(3) Third, the manuscript tradition that reads the participial phrase "the one corresponding" (ἡ συστοιχοῦσα) has to be older than the tradition that includes the indicative phrase "And she corresponds" (συστοιχεῖ δέ). It is difficult to understand why any scribe would make a change from συστοιχεῖ δέ to the reading ἡ συστοιχοῦσα. But a change in the opposite direction is easy to explain. An early scribe

who had Gal. 4:25a in his or her exemplar noticed that the participial phrase (ἡ συστοιχοῦσα) easily might be misunderstood to imply that Arabia corresponds to the present Jerusalem. This equation might be misleading or even absurd in the context. The scribe sought to eliminate this absurdity by a simple modification of the text to read "And she (Hagar) corresponds" (συστοιχεῖ δέ). The introduction of the δέ created a potential confusion over when to seek for the completion of the μέν ... δέ construction in 4:24, 26. But this confusion was apparently less of a concern than the potential absurdity that would have resulted if the participle were allowed to remain. For scribes whose exemplars included a δέ in 4:25a, the introduction of an additional δέ in συστοιχεῖ δέ was even less of a concern because the δέ in 4:25a had already disrupted the μέν ... δέ construction in 4:24, 26. An additional disruption in the syntax was inconsequential once the first disruption had been made. The original reading therefore has to be ἡ συστοιχοῦσα. This reading is attested in D* (without the article) F G it vg geo Origen$^{\text{lat}}$ Victorinus-Rome Ambrosiaster *et al.*[317] Probably the witness of Origen can be used to date this reading at least as early as ca. 250 CE.[318] The article ἡ may have been omitted from D* accidentally or to smooth out the syntax.

(4) The reading of Gal. 4:25a that results from the previous three considerations is almost inescapably disruptive in its context. The translation of the text implied by the discussion to this point would read, "... which is Hagar—but Sinai is a mountain in Arabia—which corresponds to the present Jerusalem ..." (... ἥτις ἐστιν Ἁγὰρ—τὸ δὲ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ—ἡ συστοιχοῦσα ...). The intrusive nature of Gal. 4:25a is readily apparent when the text is read in this way. First, the opening δέ ("but") clearly interrupts the flow of argument and makes a confusing break in the μέν ... δέ construction in 4:24, 26. Second, the absence of "Hagar" from Gal. 4:25a leaves this statement as an intrusive geographical comment about the location of Sinai that adds nothing essential to the argument being made in the context. Third, the inclusion of ἡ συστοιχοῦσα is especially confusing because it could suggest that "Arabia" rather than "Hagar"

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[317] The previous lists of witnesses have relied on the UBS^{4} and the NA^{27}, but here I have had to rely partly on Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece, loc. cit.*

[318] The reading is attested in Origen's *Hom. Cant. Canticorum* 2.52 (*PG* 13.115), available only in a Latin translation. Origen reads, "... quae est Agar. Sina enim mons est in Arabia, qui confertur huic quae nunc est Hierusalem, et servit cum filiis suis."

corresponds to "Jerusalem" ("Arabia, which corresponds to the present Jerusalem"). These problems can be eliminated by understanding Gal. 4:25a either as an interpolation or as a parenthesis.

The textual history of Gal. 4:25 can be summarized as follows.

(1) The original reading of Gal. 4:24b–25a probably was: "For these are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai giving birth into slavery, which is Hagar, the woman who corresponds to the present Jerusalem" (ἥτις ἐστιν ῾Αγὰρ, ἡ συστοιχοῦσα τῇ νῦν ᾽Ιερουσαλήμ). Origen preserved the original participle of this reading in his own text in ca. 250 CE.

(2) A scribe sensed that the close relationship that Paul had established between Sinai, Hagar, and Jerusalem might be misunderstood to imply that Paul was saying that Sinai was somehow in or near Jerusalem. The scribe then made a note in the margin (or in the text itself) that said, "But (or 'Of course,') Sinai is a mountain in Arabia" (τὸ δέ Σινα ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ ᾽Αραβίᾳ). This is precisely the form of Gal. 4:25a that appears in *p*46, which is the oldest witness to the text. Origen differs only slightly in substituting "For" (γάρ) in place of "But" (δέ).[319] But Origen's reading of this verse is preserved only in Latin. The Latin translation of Origen may have been influenced by the popularity of "For" (γάρ) in the Latin traditions concerning this verse.[320] Origen himself may have agreed with *p*46 in reading "But" (δέ) in Gal. 4:25a (though he differed from *p*46 in his preserving the original participle in the following phrase). The original form of the marginal note is probably accurately preserved in the text of Gal. 4:25a in *p*46.

(3) This marginal note was incorporated into the text and preserved in a variety of witnesses (*p*46 vg$^{\text{mss}}$ cop$^{\text{sa}}$ Hesychius$^{\text{lat}}$ Ambrosiaster). This must have occurred before 200 CE, when it was included in *p*46.

(4) The intrusive nature of the resulting form of Gal. 4:25a was noticed almost immediately and the first of a series of attempts was made to relate it more closely to its context. The potential absurdity that would have been created by confusion over the antecedent of "the one corresponding" (ἡ συστοιχοῦσα) was eliminated by replacing the participial phrase (ἡ συστοιχοῦσα) with the indicative phrase (συστοιχεῖ δέ). This must have occurred no later than 200 CE, when

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[319] See note on Origen above.

[320] See the discussion of γάρ and δέ above.

the indicative phrase appeared in *p*46. But only a few decades later Origen was either still unaware of this new reading or recognized the priority of the participial form.[321]

(5) Two subsequent attempts were made to harmonize Gal. 4:25a with its context. One was the replacement of δέ ("But") with the later γάρ ("For"). The other was the addition of the word Ἁγάρ ("Hagar"). Both of these were added by scribes who noticed that a statement about the geographical location of Mt. Sinai was intrusive in a context in which the focus was on the allegorical significance of Hagar. The addition of Ἁγάρ brought Gal. 4:25a into sufficient harmony with the context to satisfy ancient scribes and modern text editors. But it resulted in a needless repetition of an idea already stated in 4:24b.

Thus by 200 CE at least two manuscript traditions existed: one with the original participle (ἡ συστοιχοῦσα) and one with the later indicative phrase (συστοιχεῖ δέ). The reading with the original participle was already present in enough manuscripts by 200 CE to be preserved later by Origen and to establish a tradition that withstood complete obliteration by the newer indicative tradition until well into the Medieval period. In 200 CE the tradition with the original participle itself may have consisted of two traditions: a tradition with the original reading (without Gal. 4:25a) and a tradition that included the interpolation of Gal. 4:25a (as in the case of Origen). But since no texts without the interpolation have survived, it must have been added at a relatively early stage in the history of the text.

Since two or three traditions already existed by 200 CE, the marginal notation was probably not incorporated into the text much later than 150 CE. The notation itself could have been placed in the margin at almost any time before this. This obviously brings us to a stage in which many of the Christian scribes who copied the texts were in touch with Jewish tradition and in some cases were themselves Jewish. Therefore the statement, "But Sinai is a mountain in Arabia," probably provides another early witness to the Jewish tradition of locating Mt. Sinai in Arabia.[322]

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[321] See note on Origen above.

[322] A Christian Jewish text tradition in *p*46 would be especially likely if *p*46 comes from a tradition of subordinationist Christology; cf. Howard Eshbaugh, "Textual Variants and Theology: A Study of the Galatians Text of Papyrus 46," *JSNT* 3 (1979):60–72.

The Jewish origin of the idea expressed in this statement would be certain if the author of Gal. 4:25a were Paul himself. Franz Mussner argued that Paul himself added the geographical parenthesis in Gal. 4:25a.[323] Mussner suggested that in 4:25a Paul was acknowledging the actual geographical location of Mt. Sinai so that he could more clearly emphasize that the equation between Sinai and Jerusalem was strictly an allegorical one. This possibility cannot be dismissed entirely. Long digressions, anacoloutha, and parenthetical qualifications are certainly common in Paul's letters.[324] Some of the most poignant examples of Paul's penchant for introducing radical breaks in syntax may be found in the early chapters of Galatians itself (Gal. 1:1; 2:3–4; 2:6). But Paul's style is still on the whole clear, smooth, and nowhere nearly as convoluted as that of Origen and other writers who made the parenthesis one of the hallmarks of their style. Thus some degree of doubt must be attached to Mussner's argument that Gal. 4:25a was a parenthetical qualification introduced by Paul. The intrusive nature of Gal. 4:25a is so conspicuous that it was quickly recognized in antiquity and became the dominant factor in motivating the entire history of "corrections" to the text as shown in the textual history as it was described above. The intrusive nature of this statement easily could be explained if the statement did not come from the hand of Paul in the first place.

Whether Paul or a copyist was the author of Gal. 4:25a, the meaning attributed to "Arabia" in this passage cannot be determined with any greater precision than in the case of Gal. 1:17. The safest way to understand "Arabia" in Gal. 4:25a is in its broadest possible sense. It may refer to any part of the vast area encompassed by Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix.

5. *Josephus*

Josephus provides the most explicit testimony to a precise location associated with Mt. Sinai in all of ancient Jewish literature. The witness of Josephus offers direct confirmation of the Alexandrian tradition of locating Mt. Sinai near the city of Madyan in northwestern Arabia. As in the case of Paul, Josephus's perspective on the location of Mt. Sinai may have been derived from Alexandrian traditions, indigenous traditions from Palestine, traditions from some other region, or a variety of different traditions.

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[323] Mussner, *Galaterbrief*, 322–24; cf. Mussner, "Hagar, Sinai, Jerusalem," 56–60. Mussner accepts the form of the text found in *p*46 *et al.*

[324] BDF § 465–70.

Graham Davies has suggested that Josephus located Mt. Sinai in the Sinai peninsula because in *Ap.* 2.25 Josephus appears to place Mt. Sinai "between Egypt and Arabia."[325] But this passage certainly cannot be used as evidence for what Josephus himself believed. This passage was part of a summary of Apion's version of the exodus. Apion's placement of Mt. Sinai was probably nothing more than a logical inference from his reduction of the exodus to a journey of six days (*Ap.* 2.21, 25). Apion's image of a six-day journey from Egypt to Palestine was probably not his own creation. Apion mentioned the journey of six days in his explanation of the origins of the Sabbath (*Ap.* 2.21). The figure of six or seven days also appears in Pompeius Trogus, Plutarch, and Tacitus, all of whom relied upon Egyptian sources.[326] Pompeius Trogus was writing half a century before Apion and thus could not have relied on Apion. Both Trogus and Apion may have derived the figure of six or seven days from an older Egyptian attempt to explain the origin of the Sabbath. It is possible, however, that they derived the image of a journey of six or seven days from a Jewish source. Ezekiel's *Exagoge* refers to a journey of seven days, which may have been an idealization of the journey from Egypt to Palestine (*Exagoge* 167–71 in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.12). Apion may have known Ezekiel's *Exagoge* or some Jewish source that idealized the length of the exodus as Ezekiel had done. The source may, on the other hand, have derived the figure of six or seven days from the actual distance along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea from Pelusium or Casius to one of the coastal cities of Judaea.[327]

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[325] Davies, *Way of the Wilderness*, 10–11.

[326] Pompeius Trogus in Justinus *Hist. Philip.* 36 *Epitoma* 2.14 (readily accessible in *GLAJJ* no. 137); Plutarch *Iside* 31, 363C–D; Tacitus *Hist.* 5.3.2. See notes to *GLAJJ* nos. 137, 259, 281.

[327] Menahem Stern, *GLAJJ*, 2.36, assumes that Tacitus and the others reflect "the minimum time needed for crossing by land from Egypt to Palestine," citing Arrian *Anab.* 3.1.1; Curtius Rufus 4.7.2; and correctly observing that the same journey normally took longer. Philo *Mos.* 1.163 places the boundaries of Palestine only three days from Egypt. The distance from Pelusium to the Brook of Egypt is approximately 130 km (80 miles), which is the upper end of a journey of three days; cf. the figures in Davies, "Significance," 89–97. The even longer journey from Pelusium to Jerusalem would require a rather speedy journey if the distance was to be covered in seven days. In normal cases such a journey would take a few days longer. Thus it may be more likely that the distance assumed is from Pelusium or Casius to one of the coastal cities of Judaea rather than to Jerusalem.

The figure of six or seven days may have resulted from the experience of pilgrimage along the coastal route from Alexandria to Jerusalem. Thus Apion may have derived the image of a journey of six or seven days from either an Egyptian or a Jewish source.

Apion's source probably did not specify a location for Mt. Sinai. The Jewish playwright Ezekiel, who shares Apion's image of a journey of approximately seven days, did not mention a visit of the Israelites to Mt. Sinai in his dramatic narrative of the exodus (cf. discussion of the *Exagoge* above). Plutarch and Tacitus say nothing about Mt. Sinai. Pompeius Trogus may preserve a garbled form of a Jewish tradition that located Mt. Sinai in Arabia.[328] But he mistakenly thought that Mt. Sinai functioned as the fortified citadel of Damascus. The divergence between Trogus and Apion may be the result of the unique contribution of Trogus, Apion, or both of them to the traditions that they had received. Apion may have concluded that Mt. Sinai had to be in the Sinai peninsula because a visit to Mt. Sinai during a journey of six or seven days from Egypt to Palestine left no time for detours outside of the Sinai peninsula. Apion himself thus may be the only one who located Mt. Sinai in the Sinai peninsula.

Even if Apion were dependent on a Jewish source for this location, it would not support the attempt of Davies to find evidence that Mt. Sinai should be identified with a site in the southern Sinai peninsula. Apion believed that the journey from Egypt to Palestine took six days. This figure clearly does not provide enough time for a visit to the southern Sinai peninsula or anywhere away from the shortest route from Egypt to Palestine. Apion's description of a visit to Mt. Sinai during the course of a journey of six days from Egypt to Palestine thus would require that Mt. Sinai be located along one of the northern or coastal routes from Egypt to Palestine. If Apion were dependent on a Jewish source for his location of Mt. Sinai, he would provide the only witness to an early post-biblical Jewish tradition locating Mt. Sinai in the northern Sinai peninsula. But it is extremely unlikely that Apion was relying on any Jewish tradition for his placement of Mt. Sinai (cf. the short journey like that of Apion's in Lysimachus; Josephus *Ap.* 1.309). The vicious anti-Jewish polemics of Apion provide a tenuous source from which to derive accurate historical information about Jewish traditions. This is especially so when the proposed tradition is unattested elsewhere, as it is in this case. No ancient Jewish source from our period locates Mt. Sinai in the northern Sinai peninsula. Thus it is probably best to understand Apion's unique placement of Mt. Sinai as his own creation.

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[328] Justinus *Hist. Philip.* 36 *Epitoma* 2.14 (*GLAJJ* no. 137). Cf. Gese, "'Αγάρ," 89.

Josephus himself clearly located Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia. In *Ant.* 3.33, 39–40, 62, Josephus locates Rephidim, the station of the exodus immediately prior to the arrival at Mt. Sinai, in the region of Petra. This would have placed the Israelites directly west of Mt. Seir. From this point they would have had to turn either north or south to continue on their journey. In the narrative of Josephus the Israelites were still moving away from Egypt at this stage of their journey and did not yet want to enter Palestine. So the only natural progression was south along Mt. Seir to the northwestern border of Arabia Felix (the Arabian peninsula). This implies that Josephus believed that Mt. Sinai was in northwestern Arabia. This point is confirmed in *Ant.* 2.257, 264–65; 3.76, where he indicates that Mt. Sinai was "the highest of the mountains" in the region of "the city of Madiane" (πόλις Μαδιανή). "Madiane" is probably the city of Madyan located by Ptolemy and other sources in northwestern Arabia east of the Gulf of ʿAqaba.[329]

Josephus therefore identified Mt. Sinai with the highest mountain near Madyan in northwestern Arabia. In this he provides explicit testimony to what was already implied in Philo (cf. above). One can only speculate about whether Josephus's knowledge of this mountain derived from a pilgrimage undertaken during his brief foray into the life of various sects (*Life* 11–12). Josephus could have simply derived his view of the location of Mt. Sinai from the LXX/OG and other Alexandrian sources that placed it near the city of Madyan. Josephus certainly had access to the LXX/OG and clearly knew a wide variety of Alexandrian traditions.[330] But Josephus also had access to a wealth of local Palestinian traditions (e.g., *Life* 1–31; *J.W.* 1.1–18). He could have derived his identification of Mt. Sinai from priestly tradition, personal pilgrimage, the narratives of other Jewish pilgrims, or biblical interpretation.

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[329] Ptolemy *Geogr.* 6.7.2, "Μοδίανα ἢ Μοδοῦνα" (Modiana or Modouna) is along the coast of the Gulf of ʿAqaba; 6.7.27, Μαδιάμα (Madiama) is in the interior of the Arabian peninsula slightly northeast of Modiana. Both probably refer to the same city. See the full discussion above in the section on the LXX/OG. Cf. Davies, *Way of the Wilderness*, 10.

[330] Josephus preserves a wealth of information about Alexandrian Judaism (e.g., *Ant.* 18.257–60 *et al.*), especially in his *Contra Apionem* (e.g., *Ap.* 2.33–78).

The abundance of local traditions available to Josephus suggests that it may be best to understand him as a witness to an independent tradition in Palestine that located Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia. The author of *Jubilees* and Paul also may have known this tradition. Both the Alexandrian tradition and the Palestinian tradition may have ultimately derived from the same source. The association of Mt. Sinai with the city of Madyan in the LXX/OG would allow us to date this source to at least as early as ca. 250 BCE.

E. *Continuity and Discontinuity in Later Traditions*

1. *Early Rabbinic Sources*

Later sources that refer to Mt. Sinai are beyond the scope of this study. But some comments on later sources are appropriate because of what these sources imply about the development of traditions concerning Mt. Sinai. Brief attention to rabbinic sources is especially necessary because of the way that they frequently have been plundered to provide evidence for identifying various sites with Mt. Sinai. The following discussion of these and other later sources makes no attempt at being comprehensive.

The earliest of the major rabbinic sources probably do not date much before 200 CE. Most of these sources are almost completely irrelevant for discussions of where Jews located Mt. Sinai in the period before 117 CE. Rabbinic sources were not intended to be historical documents and rarely provide accurate historical information about periods much earlier than the time in which they were placed in written form. Jacob Neusner and others have repeatedly demonstrated that rabbinic tradition was never simply the faithful preservation and transmission of information derived from previous generations.[331] The rabbinic concept of "tradition" included a decisive penchant for innovation and the creation of new traditions that were designed to address the needs of the contemporary audience.[332]

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[331] E.g., Jacob Neusner, "Appendix 3: Story and Tradition in Judaism," *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago 1981), 307–328.

[332] See the excellent discussion in Martin S. Jaffee, "Halakhah in Early Rabbinic Judaism: Innovation Beyond Exegesis, Tradition Before the Oral Torah," *Innovation in Religious Traditions*, ed. Michael A. Williams, Collett Cox, and Martin S. Jaffee (Berlin 1992), 109–142.

In many cases new traditions were created simply to legitimate or enhance the power and position of the rabbis.[333] In other cases new traditions of interpretation that had little relationship to actual historical realities outside of the rabbinic academy were generated simply by the internal logic of rabbinic hermeneutics and debate.[334] The strong element of innovation in rabbinic tradition has been recognized for centuries.[335]

Demonstrated awareness of these issues is often stunningly absent from the zealous "quest of the historical Mt. Sinai." Sources as late as the twelfth century CE have been given great weight in attempts to identify the site of the Mt. Sinai of biblical tradition.[336] In many cases no consideration at all has been given to the possibility that these sources were intended to offer edification or entertainment rather than historical information. Sensitivity to the internal systemic logic of rabbinic hermeneutics often seems be completely absent when the antiquity of a rabbinic "tradition" about Mt. Sinai is being argued. A few brief examples will suffice.

The distance between Mt. Sinai and the desert of Paran is said to be "36 miles" in *Sifre Num.* 82, 84 to Num. 10:33, 35 and *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num. 10:33 (cf. Num. 10:12, 33). Graham Davies has pointed out a fortuitous parallel between this figure and the "35 miles" between Jebel Musa or a neighboring peak and the town of Pharan cited by the Christian pilgrim Egeria (*Peregr.* 6.1).[337] He claims that this parallel ultimately provides Tannaitic evidence for Jewish pilgrimage to the southern Sinai peninsula. From this he infers that there may have been an older Jewish "tradition" of locating Mt. Sinai in the southern Sinai peninsula.

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[333] See the paradigmatic statement in *m. Avoth* 1:1. Cf. Jaffee, "Halakhah in Early Rabbinic Judaism," 109–142.

[334] E.g., in *Lev. Rab.* 7.5, the rabbinic penchant for literalistic interpretation and homiletic entertainment contributed to a desire to provide a literalistic explanation for the fact that the fire is said to be "in" the altar (*bo*) of the sanctuary in Lev 6:2 rather than "on" it (*'alayv*). The explanation that was offered is that the altar supernaturally produced the fire from within itself. It would be rather absurd to attribute this imaginative interpretation to a historically reliable tradition about the altar used by the Israelites in the desert.

[335] E.g., see Leon Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology: Excerpts from the Early Literature*, Yale Judaica Series 7 (New Haven 1952), 69–79.

[336] E.g., Koenig, *Site de Al-Jaw*, 78–96, referring to late portions of *Numbers Rabbah.* The late Medieval date of this material has long been well known; e.g., see Hermann L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (New York 1969), 214.

[337] Davies, *Way of the Wilderness*, 23–24. The tradition in *Sifre Num.* 82, 84 is the unidentified "2d-century AD Jewish source" (Davies's date) mentioned in G.I. Davies, "Sinai, Mount," *ABD* 6.47–49, esp. 48.

The "36 miles" mentioned in the rabbinic passages cannot be used as evidence of knowledge of an actual site. This figure is nothing more than a midrashic schematization of the journey of "three days" mentioned in Num. 10:33. The figure of "36 miles" for a journey of three days assumes that a single day's journey was 12 miles. Twelve miles is certainly a reasonable figure for a day's journey. But the number 12 immediately should raise the suspicion of anyone familiar with the role of this number in biblical tradition.

The figure of 12 miles was derived from Josh 3:4, 17; 4:3, where an entire day was required for each of the twelve tribes to cover a distance of 2,000 cubits one at a time. The distance of 2,000 cubits was a standard rabbinic "mile" (7 1/2 *ris; m. Yoma* 6:4, 8). Hence the twelve tribes required a full day to traverse 12 miles. From this the rabbis concluded that 12 miles represented a standard day's journey for the Israelites in the desert. Evidence of this logic appears in rabbinic calculations of the length of the Israelite camp implied in Num. 33:49, which was placed at 12 miles (*Mek. Bachodesh* 9 to Exod. 20:21; *y. Shebi* 6:1 [36c]; cf. Josh 3:1). This figure is again assumed in *Mek. Bachodesh* 9 to Exod. 20:19. This passage states that on the day that the Ten Commandments were given the Israelites were so terrified that the entire camp trembled with fear as a unified whole, moving back and forth 12 miles as each of the Ten Commandments was spoken. As a result of this movement, the Israelites moved a total of 240 miles on the day on which the Ten Commandments were given. Such figures powerfully conveyed an edifying message about the fear of God to the rabbinic audience. But they can hardly be used as a basis for reconstructing history. The schematized journey of 36 miles in three days cited by Davies, which is based on the purely speculative exegetical assumption that a single day's journey was 12 miles, is thus a completely useless datum for any attempt to locate Mt. Sinai.

A similar problem applies to *Mek. Bachodesh* 1 on Exod. 19:2, which places the camp of the Israelites on the "east" of Mt. Sinai. Davies's tentative suggestion that this refers to the location of the St. Catherine's monastery obviously goes well beyond anything that may be inferred from this statement.[338] Hundreds of mountains in the Near East would afford suitable camp sites on the east side. But the greatest obstacle to obtaining information about Mt. Sinai from this statement is that this statement does not seem to be based on any knowledge of an actual site at all. The location of the Israelite camp on the "east" side of the mountain was derived from the simple application of a hermeneutical formula concerning the common Hebrew preposition *neged*, which appears in Exod. 19:2.[339] The *Mekilta* text states that this word refers to the east side in "every place" in which it occurs, not just this verse. The derivation of this formula for the interpretation of *neged* is unclear. But the universalistic manner in which the formula is stated indicates that it must be understood as a general principle applied specifically to this verse rather than an attempt to fit this verse into what was known about any actual location. The formula seems to have been applied to this verse not because the rabbis knew of a campsite associated with Mt. Sinai, but precisely because they did not. As with so many other hermeneutical formulae used by the rabbis, the formula provided a way to explain the text as fully as possible in the absence of accurate historical knowledge of what the text originally meant.

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[338] Davies, *Way of the Wilderness*, 28. But contrast Anati, where the sites at the foot of Har Karkom are concentrated on the northwest; Emmanuel Anati, *Har*

One of the clearest examples of the degree to which Tannaitic tradition relied on biblical interpretation rather than knowledge of an actual site for its traditions about Mt. Sinai is found in the comments on Deut. 1:2 in *Sifre Deut.* 2. This passage contains a purely speculative exegetical debate about various possible distances to Mt. Sinai. Nowhere in this debate can one find evidence of knowledge of an actual site. Pressed with a historical question, the rabbis falter. The rabbis were simply more interested in developing systems for edification and clarifying issues of halakhic practice than they were in studying history.[340]

Later Amoraic and Medieval rabbinic tradition shows similar concerns. For example, *Num. Rab.* 13:3 (Naso) states that God gave glory to Mt. Sinai because it humbled itself and claimed to be lowly. In

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Karkom in the Light of New Discoveries, Studi Camuni 11 (Capo di Ponte 1993); Anati, *Mountain*, 47–49, 84–101.

[339] "Every place in which you find *neged* it refers to the side on the east." The rule applies in "every place," not just Exod. 19:2. Thus the location of the camp on the "east" of Mt. Sinai was simply a necessary conclusion dictated by a general rule.

[340] Cf. Joseph Heinemann, "The Nature of the Aggadah," *Midrash and Literature*, ed. G. Hartman and S. Budick (New Haven 1986), 41–55.

contrast, Mt. Tabor and Mt. Carmel exalted themselves and boasted about how high they were. This little tale is only one element in a long series of imaginative illustrations designed to emphasize the relationship between honor and humility expressed in Prov. 29:23. It is rather surprising that this playful image of talking mountains found in a late Medieval text and other materials of a similar nature have been used as evidence that the biblical Mt. Sinai was a mountain of low elevation.[341] Such material is also rather tenuous evidence on which to construct any discussion of Jewish pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai. Late Talmudic rabbis do occasionally refer to actual pilgrimages to certain sites along the route of the exodus.[342] But they were generally more interested in study with holy individuals than in costly pilgrimage to distant holy places.

2. *Christian and Islamic Sources*

Christian and Islamic traditions provide more explicit testimony to the persistence of Jewish traditions that located Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia. In the middle of the third century Origen reaffirmed the tradition of locating "the city of Madiam" (Madyan) in northwestern Arabia to the east of the Red Sea.[343] The context of his reference to Madyan suggests that he may have been relying on a Jewish source for this tradition because he appears to have been following Jewish traditions about the geographical associations of the descendants of Keturah.[344] His acceptance of Jewish traditions concerning the location of Madyan in northwestern Arabia suggests that he may also have maintained the older Jewish tradition of locating Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia near the city of Madyan.[345] He may have derived his knowledge of this tradition from the LXX/OG or some other Alexandrian Jewish source.

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[341] Koenig, *Site de Al-Jaw*, 78–96. Cf. also Har-El, *Sinai Journeys*, 423, who cites *Gen. Rab.* 99 [99.1]; *b. Meg.* 29a; and other texts.

[342] *B. Ber.* 54a does not mention Mt. Sinai but could refer to pilgrimage sites; Davies, *Way of the Wilderness*, 14–15. The travels in *b. Bab. Bathra* 73a–74a; *Erub.* 55b; *Yoma* 75b are sheer fantasy.

[343] Origen *Selecta in Genesim* 39 (*PG* 12.120).

[344] Cf. above on the LXX/OG and Demetrius; also note Josephus *Ant.* 1.238–41; Gen 25:1–6 LXX.

[345] The location of the "Arabian mountain" mentioned by Origen's contemporary, Dionysius of Alexandria, is uncertain; Eusebius *EH* 6.42.3–4. It may be associated with Christian ascetics who had begun to establish themselves near Jebel Serbal in the Sinai peninsula; cf. Hobbs, *Mount Sinai*, 68. But nothing said by Dionysius implies that anyone identified the "Arabian mountain" with Mt. Sinai in the third century CE. In addition, the "Arabian mountain" may in fact refer to a location in Egypt itself between the Nile and the Red Sea gulf of Heroopolis; Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen*, 77.

Eusebius (ca. 330 CE) provides more certain evidence of the Christian adoption of the Jewish tradition of placing Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia. In his description of "Horeb" in *Onom.* 172 s.v. "Horeb" (χωρήβ), Eusebius reconciled the various biblical traditions about Mt. Sinai and Mt. Horeb by identifying these names with two different mountains located next to one another.[346] Eusebius stated that Horeb is "(the) mountain of God in the outlying countryside (χώρα) of Madiam (Μαδιάμ). It is located beside Mt. Sinai beyond (ὑπερ) Arabia in the desert." Eusebius's use of χώρα, a word that sometimes refers to the outlying countryside dominated by a city, suggests that he believed that Mt. Horeb was in the immediate environs of Madiam. This is further suggested by the way that his statement that Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai are "beyond Arabia" parallels what he says about the location of Madiam in his description of Madiam.

In *Onom.* 124 s.v. "Madiam" (Μαδιάμ), Eusebius states that Madiam is "a city (πόλις) named Madiam from one of the sons of Abraham and Keturah. And it is located beyond ("on the far side of"; ἐπέκεινα) Arabia toward the south in the desert of the Saracens on the east of the Red Sea. From this is derived the name of the Madianites (Μαδιαναῖοι) and the (city) now called Madiane (Μαδιανή)."[347] In these statements Eusebius was trying to explain the location of the Madiam mentioned in his Bible, which included the LXX/OG. The area implied in "the desert of the Saracens" is rather broad because the term "Saracens" probably referred to various Arabian tribes living primarily in the Arabian peninsula and the Arabian desert east of Palestine.[348] The identification of Madiam as a "city" on the "east of the Red Sea" is more specific. It leaves room for little doubt that

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[346] Page numbers refer to the standard critical edition, which is Erich Klostermann, *Eusebius Werke: III. Band 1. Hälfte: Das Onomastikon der Biblischen Ortsnamen*, GCS (Leipzig 1904); cf. xi–xii for the date.

[347] The word "city" is the only feminine noun explicitly mentioned that would provide an antecedent for the feminine article in the last phrase (the [city] now called Madiane). The Latin translation reads "*regio*," however. Thus one cannot exclude the possibility that the missing noun at this point is "land" (γῆ) or "district" (χώρα).

[348] David F. Graf, "Rome and the Saracens: Reassessing the Nomadic Menace," *L'Arabie Préislamique*, 341–400; cf. Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen*, 76. Note that Ptolemy specifically locates the tribe of the "Saracens" in or near the same region of northwestern Arabia as the city of Madiama (= Madyan); cf. Ptolemy *Geogr.* 6.7.21; 6.7.27.

Eusebius had in mind the city of Madyan in northwestern Arabia. The spelling that he gives for the contemporary name of the city (Μαδιανή) is in fact the same spelling used by Josephus when he refers to this city (*Ant.* 2.257).

Eusebius's statement that Madyan is located "beyond Arabia" would be incomprehensible if "Arabia" was intended in its broad geographical sense or as a reference to the Arabian peninsula. In either of these two cases Madyan could only be "in Arabia." But placing Madyan "beyond Arabia" makes perfect sense if Eusebius was referring to the Roman province of Arabia. By the time of Eusebius, the major centers of the Roman province of Arabia had moved northward.[349] The southern border of the province was consequently deliberately relocated northward by detaching the southern region of the province from the province of Arabia and including this region in the province of Palestine.[350] By the fourth century, Eusebius could easily look out from his window in Caesarea and say that the city of Madyan in northwestern Arabia was "beyond Arabia toward the south."

Because Eusebius said that Mt. Horeb was in the desert near Madyan, it was only logical for him to add that Mt. Horeb itself was "beyond Arabia" in *Onom.* 172 s.v. "Horeb." By this he meant that Mt. Horeb, like Madyan, was from his perspective "beyond" (south of) the Roman province of Arabia. This probably excludes any possible reference to a location in the Sinai peninsula. A location in the Sinai peninsula would not have required any movement across or "beyond" the province of Arabia from Eusebius's location in Caesarea. The simple fact that Eusebius plotted the location of Mt. Horeb on the basis of the city of Madyan rather than any other city suggests that it was closer to this city than it was to any city in the Sinai peninsula.[351] Since Madyan was in northwestern Arabia, this would imply that Eusebius believed that Mt. Horeb was also in northwestern Arabia. Because Eusebius located Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai next to one another, he must have believed that both were in northwestern Arabia near the city of Madyan.

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[349] Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 143–44.

[350] Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 143–44. Petra, the Negev, and probably the northern Hejaz (northwestern Saudi Arabia) had been detached from the province of Arabia and added to Palestine.

[351] Davies, *Way of the Wilderness*, 32–33, dismisses Eusebius's statement locating Horeb near Madyan by saying that this statement "is not an attempt to localise Horeb in terms of a contemporary place-name, but a reference to Biblical nomenclature such as often appears in the *Onomasticon*." I am not sure that this objection has any real force in the context of the *Onomasticon*. The whole purpose of the entire *Onomasticon* is to explain "Biblical nomenclature" by identification with "contemporary place-names." Eusebius's statements about Madiam in *Onom.* 124 s.v. "Madiam"

Eusebius may have simply followed Origen in his understanding of the location of Mt. Horeb. But Eusebius also may have been influenced by his own reading of the LXX/OG, Demetrius, Philo, Josephus, or one of the many other Jewish sources that he mentioned or quoted in his voluminous writings.[352] In addition, Eusebius's location in Caesarea gave him access to many other Jewish sources that are never explicitly identified in his written works.

In the late fourth century Eusebius's *Onomasticon* was translated into Latin by Jerome, who consequently based many of his own views of biblical geography directly on Eusebius. Unlike Eusebius, Jerome identified Horeb and Sinai with one mountain (Jerome in Eusebius *Onom.* 173 s.v. "Horeb" [Choreb]). But Jerome seems to have followed Eusebius in identifying this mountain with a location near Madyan in northwestern Arabia east of the Red Sea.[353]

By the time of Jerome, the rival tradition that located Mt. Sinai in the southern Sinai peninsula had at last begun its first inchoate stages of development within the various monastic communities of the Sinai peninsula.[354] But the tradition of locating Mt. Sinai near the city of Madyan apparently persisted in Christian circles until sometime after the Arab conquest. Islamic sources from ca. 700 refer to Christian anchorites who lived in the mountains around Madyan.[355] These anchorites, possibly together with local Jews, may have been the source from which later Islamic tradition received the traditions associating Moses and Mt. Sinai with the city of Madyan.

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indicate that he clearly did identify biblical Midian (Madiam in the LXX/OG) with a contemporary place-name. The objection of Davies stems from a desire to exclude evidence that is contrary to his own attempts to locate Mt. Sinai in the southern Sinai peninsula.

[352] Cf. *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9 for numerous examples of Jewish sources.

[353] On Jerome, see Jerome in Eusebius *Onom.* 125 s.v. "Madiam"; 143 s.v. "Rafidim"; 167 s.v. "Faran"; 173 s.v. "Choreb"; and the notes on the parallel entries in Eusebius above. Jerome emphasizes the connection between Horeb and Pharan more strongly than Eusebius; *Onom.* 172–73 s.v. "Horeb"-"Choreb."

[354] Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen*, 75–166.

[355] Musil, *Northern Hegaz*, 281; F. Buhl and C.E. Bosworth, "Madyan Shuʿayb," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. C. Bosworth *et al.* (Leiden 1986), 5.1155–56; C.E. Bosworth, "Madyan Shuʿayb in Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Lore and History," *JSS* 29 (1984):53–64, esp. 62–63.

Islamic sources ultimately became the primary avenue for the transmission of the tradition that identified Madyan with the home of Jethro and Moses. The Qur'an states that Shuy'ab, a prophet of the pre-Mosaic period closely associated with Moses and later identified with the father-in-law of Moses, lived in the city of Madyan.[356] Islamic sources from at least as early as ca. 900 state that the city of Madyan contained the well from which Moses watered the flocks of Shuy'ab.[357] These traditions seem to have persisted with unbroken continuity into the early modern period.[358] Associated with these traditions is a persistent Islamic tradition locating Mt. Sinai near Madyan.[359] The Islamic traditions about Moses and Jethro continue to survive in local legends in the town of Al-Badʿ (Mugha'ir Shuʿayb), which occupies the large oasis at the site of ancient Madyan.[360] Not surprisingly, these local legends include a tradition of identifying "the mountain of Moses" with one of the mountains near Al-Badʿ (see below).[361]

Thus the Jewish tradition of locating Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia near the city of Madyan persisted long after competing Christian traditions of pilgrimage to the southern Sinai peninsula had developed.[362] The town of Al-Badʿ appears to occupy the site of an unbroken tradition associated with Moses and Jethro that extends from the present back to the first mention of this tradition in the LXX/OG in ca. 250 BCE. No other site identified with Mt. Sinai in modern scholarship can claim to possess a tradition of such antiquity or of such indisputably Jewish origin. If one seeks the "Mt. Sinai of Jewish tradition," one will henceforth have to seek a mountain near Al-Badʿ.

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[356] Qur'an 7.83–91; 11.85–98; 29.35–36. See Musil, *Northern Hegaz,* 109–118, and esp. 278–82; Buhl and Bosworth, "Madyan Shuʿayb," 1156.

[357] Musil, *Northern Hegaz,* 279–82; Buhl and Bosworth, "Madyan Shuʿayb," 1156.

[358] Musil, *Northern Hegaz,* 109–118, and esp. 278–82; Philby, *Land of Midian,* 211–16; Bosworth, "Madyan Shuʿayb in Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Lore and History," 53–64.

[359] Maiberger, *Untersuchungen,* 31–44 (though Maiberger's patently tendentious efforts to transfer some of the statements about a location in northwestern Arabia to Jebel Musa must be rejected).

[360] Musil, *Northern Hegaz,* 109–118; Philby, *Land of Midian,* 211–16. On the identification of Al-Badʿ with Madyan, which is not in doubt, see the previous discussion above.

[361] Larry Williams, *The Mountain of Moses* (New York 1990), 211, referring to Jebel al-Lawz.

[362] For Christian traditions, see Hobbs, *Mount Sinai,* 58–95, and esp. Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen, passim.*

F. *Patterns of Pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai and Along the Route of the Exodus*

To what degree was the persistence of the tradition of locating Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia influenced by pilgrimage to an actual site rather than exegetical speculation? The scant evidence that we have found for pilgrimage suggests that pilgrimage was probably not a major factor in sustaining this tradition. But a number of factors suggest that pilgrimage may have had some role in this tradition.

(1) Preexilic Israelite pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai, if it occurred, may have established a pattern that continued in some circles into the Hellenistic period. But this suggestion remains only a remote possibility. Preexilic traditions that were not widespread, such as pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai, may have been lost forever in the chaotic events surrounding the Babylonian exile. Preexilic traditions do imply that Mt. Sinai was located in northwestern Arabia.[363] But these early traditions do not include all of the details that developed in the traditions of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. Thus one cannot take it for granted that the mountain that was identified with Mt. Sinai by Alexandrian Jews in the third century BCE was the same mountain that was identified with Mt. Sinai by the Deuteronomist and other preexilic writers. On the other hand, one cannot completely dismiss the possibility that the post-biblical Jewish tradition of locating Mt. Sinai near the city of Madyan was a continuation of an older tradition that had existed in the biblical period. Pilgrimage may have played some role in sustaining this older tradition.

(2) The tradition of "vision quests" based on the pattern of Moses and Elijah, which has already been described, probably inspired a number of pilgrimages to Mt. Sinai in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. Paul and the circle that produced *Apoc. Abr.* 12:1–3 provide at least two probable examples of persons or groups that made vision quests to Mt. Sinai. This practice probably never extended beyond individuals and small groups. The costs and dangers of a long journey through deserts that were often inhabited by bandits and hostile nomads made it convenient to dissociate the image of a vision quest from an actual journey to Mt. Sinai. Jesus and other Jews who made vision quests into the desert seem to have been satisfied with token journeys into the desert areas not far from where they lived. The practice of vision quests into the desert ultimately

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[363] See discussion above.

played an important role in the formation of Christian monastic traditions. But the practice of following the pattern of Moses and Elijah in making a vision quest to Mt. Sinai seems to have eventually disappeared from Jewish tradition altogether.

(3) Jews who traveled through northwestern Arabia for business and other reasons may have taken advantage of the opportunities that they had to visit what they thought was Mt. Sinai. In contrast to the southern Sinai peninsula, Jewish interest in northwestern Arabia is attested in nearly all periods from the preexilic period to the modern period.[364] Jews in northwestern Arabia surely must have noticed the coincidence between the name of the city of Madyan and the biblical traditions about ancient Midian (= Madyan; cf. above on the name). This may have inspired numerous visits to some mountain near Madyan that was locally identified with Mt. Sinai. These visits then may have contributed to the further development of traditions associating Mt. Sinai with the city of Madyan.

(4) The tendency of Jews in the late Second Temple period to seek biblical explanations for peculiar environmental phenomena may have fostered the growth of traditions about Mt. Sinai. The biblical text provided Jews in the early post-biblical period with an accessible source for explaining odd natural phenomena. The Dead Sea region, for example, was interpreted in terms of biblical Sodom and Gomorrah (Josephus *J.W.* 4.481–85; cf. Philo *Abr.* 137–41; *Mos.* 2.55–56). In the case of a particular collection of artifacts in Armenia, the biblical story of Noah's ark provided a ready explanation (Josephus *Ant.* 1.92; 20.24–26; cf. Josephus *Ap.* 1.31; *Jub.* 5:28; 7:1, 17; 1QapGen 13.13). The example of Noah's ark is particularly instructive because Josephus states that the relics of the ark were shown to pilgrims (*Ant.* 1.92; 20.24–26). In the same way, various sites in northwestern Arabia may have been identified with Mt. Sinai and other sites along the route of the exodus simply because some-

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[364] See Gordon Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia: From Ancient Times to their Eclipse under Islam* (Columbia, SC 1988), *passim*; Israel Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th–5th Centuries BC* (Jerusalem and Leiden 1982) 60–72 (biblical sources); F.V. Winnett, W.L. Reed, J.T. Milik, and J. Starcky, *Ancient Records from North Arabia*, Middle East Series 6 (Toronto 1970), 163 (Byzantine Jewish inscriptions at Al-'Ula). Note also the possible Jewish name in a Thamudic inscription from Qurayyah in Parr, Harding, Dayton, *et al.*, "Preliminary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968 [part 2]," 48, no. 62.

thing about these sites prompted Jews to appeal to the biblical text to interpret and explain them.

For example, some of the Jews who traveled through northwestern Arabia in the Greco-Roman period may have believed that the volcanic sites in this region required an explanation of biblical proportion. This issue can be considered in complete isolation from the question of whether preexilic biblical traditions about Mt. Sinai were shaped by volcanic activity in this region.[365] Religious explanations of volcanic activity have been found in a wide variety of religious traditions from antiquity to the present.[366] Jews were no different from other groups who sought to understand such phenomena by appealing to religious explanations. Thunderstorms, for example, were often associated with Yahweh in biblical tradition (e.g., Job 36:24–38:1;

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[365] See especially Jean Koenig, "Le Sinaï: montagne de feu dans un désert de ténèbres," *RHR* 167 (1965):129–55. Cf. Gese, "'Αγάρ," 81–85; Koenig, "Localisation," *passim.* Those who dismiss the northwestern Arabia hypothesis typically exaggerate the significance of the volcanic argument and avoid grappling with the more serious arguments in favor of locating Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia. The detractors are certainly correct in stating that many of the features of the Sinai theophany tradition can be explained in other ways. For example, the Sinai theophany tradition in Exodus 19, 24; 1 Kings 19 draws on a common stock of ancient Near Eastern imagery. Similar imagery is found in Psa. 18:7–15 and other texts that clearly do not imply a volcanic mountain. Nevertheless, the literary traditions that preserved the imagery found in Psalm 18 and other texts were not created *ex nihilo.* The imagery of Psalm 18, for example, was inspired by thunderstorms and traditions about storm gods such as Baal. Thus it is perfectly legitimate to ask whether the imagery of the Sinai theophany was inspired by some other type of natural phenomena or traditions about some other type of deity. Appeals to volcanic imagery are, however, hardly a necessary element of the case that can be made in favor of locating the Mt. Sinai of preexilic tradition in northwestern Arabia.

[366] Any volcano is obviously an excellent candidate for a "*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*"; cf. Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational* (New York [1923] 1958), 12–40. Volcanic mountains that have been credited with religious significance include Mt. Fuji in Japan, Mt. Gunung Agung in Bali, Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Mt. Rainier in the American northwest, and many others. See Diana L. Eck, "Mountains," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York 1987), 10.130–34. The eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE inspired official ceremonies in Rome designed to propitiate the gods. These ceremonies were commemorated in a number of coin types issued in 80 CE. See Harold Mattingly, R.A.G. Carson, and Philip V. Hill, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* (2nd ed.; 6 vols; London 1962–1975), 2.lxxii–lxxiii; cf. coins of Titus, nos. 49–82. It should be emphasized, however, that the Mt. Sinai of preexilic tradition need not have been a volcano. The presence or absence of volcanic attributes for the mountain is a moot question in comparison with other arguments that can be adduced in favor of a northwestern Arabian location for the mountain(s) identified with Mt. Sinai in either the preexilic period or early post-biblical period; cf. above.

Ps. 18:9–15; 29:3–10). Biblical explanations given to thunderstorms could have easily inspired Jews in the early post-biblical period to give similar explanations to volcanic activity because thunderstorms have a number of similarities with volcanic activity. Thunderstorms even frequently accompany the ash clouds of volcanic eruptions.[367]

For many Jews in northwestern Arabia biblical traditions concerning Mt. Sinai may have provided a readily accessible source for explaining the strange volcanic phenomena of this region. These Jews may have concluded that one of the volcanic mountains in the region was the very mountain on which Moses had received the Law. The mountain that they identified with Mt. Sinai may or may not have been the same mountain identified with Mt. Sinai in the preexilic period.

Volcanic mountains are not the only mountains that may have inspired Jews in the Greco-Roman period to appeal to the biblical traditions about Mt. Sinai for an explanation. Numerous mountains in northwestern Arabia may have been identified with Mt. Sinai because they possessed unique configurations of geological features and artifactual assemblages that seemed to fit the biblical evidence. This might even provide a partial explanation for the early post-biblical Jewish tradition of locating Mt. Sinai near the city of Madyan.

The tradition of locating Mt. Sinai near the city of Madyan may have been inspired partly by the association between Mt. Sinai and the land of Midian in the biblical text (e.g., Exod. 2:15–3:1; 18:1–5). The city of Madyan was probably identified with the home of Jethro in the LXX/OG precisely because its name and location corresponded so well with the biblical evidence for the Midianite homeland of Jethro. Once Jews identified the city of Madyan with the biblical land of Midian, it was only logical that they would identify a mountain near the city of Madyan with Mt. Sinai. If the tradition of locating Mt. Sinai near the city of Madyan was not based on an older preexilic tradition, it may have been the result of the common practice of using the biblical text to exegete and explain the environment.

(5) On rare occasions pilgrimage to what was believed to be Mt. Sinai may have been inspired by an attempt to carry out an eschatological reenactment of the exodus. The image of the exodus coa-

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[367] Decker and Decker, *Mountains of Fire*, 39.

lesced with the biblical theme of return from exile to furnish many Jews in the Second Temple period with a paradigm for eschatological pilgrimage.[368] One of the common elements in this paradigm was an eschatological prophet like Moses or Elijah who would perform miraculous signs in the desert and then lead his followers to establish a messianic kingdom.[369] This paradigm provided the ideological motivation for a number of millenarian pilgrimages that often ended in disaster. In no case, however, is there any certain evidence for millenarian pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai itself.

In the first century CE the paradigm of eschatological pilgrimage provoked the rise of a number of prophets in Palestine who led their followers to expect the immediate arrival of the end of the age.[370] These movements were usually quickly crushed by the Romans. Most of the leaders of these movements seem to have been satisfied to lead their followers on a token pilgrimage out into the deserts of Judaea. Probably their motivation was partly a desire to fulfill Isaiah's command to "prepare the way for the Lord in the desert" in the hope that this would inaugurate the eschatological revelation of God.[371] Meir Weiss has shown that the biblical theme of an eschatological theophany was strongly influenced by the Sinai theophany tradition.[372] But actual pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai does not seem to have ever played an important role in the ideology of "preparing the way" in the desert for the eschatological theophany.

The image of an eschatological pilgrimage seems to have been especially popular in Egypt and the adjacent regions of northern Africa. Even Philo, who was certainly not given over to eschatological speculation, believed that there would be a future return of Jewish exiles from Egypt to Palestine (*Praem.* 164–72). Philo makes no clear reference to a Messiah in his preserved works. But for many Jews in Egypt the future eschatological pilgrimage took on the nature of a replay of the exodus under the leadership of a messianic "prophet like Moses" (cf. Deut. 18:15–19; Acts 3:22–23).[373] This image had a special immediacy for Jews in Egypt and northern Africa because for them return from the Diaspora to Palestine was in fact an exodus from or through Egypt.

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[368] E.g., Bar. 4:30–5:9; *Pss. Sol.* 11:1–9; 17:26–32. Cf. Coleman and Elsner, *Pilgrimage*, 34–51. On exile theology in the Diaspora, see A.T. Kraabel, "Unity and Diversity Among Diaspora Synagogues," *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee I. Levine (Philadelphia 1987), 49–60.

[369] E.g., Josephus *J.W.* 2.258–60; 2.261–63; 7.437–41; *Ant.* 20.97–99; 167–172; 188; Acts 21:38; cf. Josephus *Ant.* 18.85–87 (Samaritan followers led to Mt. Gerizim instead of the desert).

[370] E.g., Josephus *J.W.* 2.258–60; 2.261–63; *Ant.* 20.97–99; 167–172; 188; Acts 21:38; cf. Josephus *Ant.* 18.85–87 (to Mt. Gerizim instead of desert); on John the Baptist, see Josephus *Ant.* 18.116–19; Matt. 3:1–12; Mark 1:2–8; Luke 3:1–20; John 1:19–28.

[371] Isa. 40:3–11, esp. 40:3. Isaiah's theme was important to the self-understanding of the Qumran community; 1QS 8.12–16. The Gospels are probably correct in attributing this theme to the self-understanding of John the Baptist, though in early Christianity this theme was quickly adapted to emphasize that John was only a preparer and not the Messiah; Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:2–3; Luke 3:4–6; John 1:19–23; Acts 13:24–25.

[372] Meir Weiss, "The Origin of the 'Day of the Lord'—Reconsidered," *HUCA* 37 (1966):29–60.

The popularity of the paradigm of eschatological pilgrimage is attested by the thousands of Jews who followed an Egyptian or (more likely) an Egyptian Jew on a millenarian pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the mid-first century CE.[374] This man conceivably could have made a detour to visit Mt. Sinai during the journey from Egypt to Jerusalem. But there is no evidence that he actually did so.[375]

In another example of millenarian pilgrimage, refugees from the first Jewish revolt (66–73 CE) who had fled to Cyrene led some of their followers out into the desert to engage in what Josephus calls an "exodus" (*J.W.* 7.437–50, esp. 7.439). Their intention was probably to travel through Egypt and then onward to Palestine. The Roman governor Catullys brought an abrupt and cataclysmic end to this enterprise. This prevents us from knowing whether or not the Jews involved had planned to make a detour along the way to some site that they identified with Mt. Sinai.

The image of an eschatological pilgrimage under the leadership of a figure like Moses also may have played a key role in the Jewish revolt in Cyrenaica and Egypt under Trajan.[376] But it seems unlikely that pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai distracted any Jews from the pressing exigencies of orchestrating the revolt. Pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai might never have played any role at all in the popular image of eschatological pilgrimage.

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[373] Examples follow in the next few lines. Similar eschatological views were probably shared by Samaritans in Egypt; cf. Josephus *Ant.* 18.85–87. On Samaritans in Egypt, see Josephus *Ant.* 11.345; 12.7–10; 13.74–79.

[374] The number of followers is set at 30,000 in Josephus *J.W.* 2.261–63, but this is certainly incorrect and may have resulted from a scribal error; cf. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia 1971), 619–20. The figures in *Ant.* 20.169–72 suggest a number closer to the 4,000 mentioned in Acts 21:38. But identification with the figure in Acts is uncertain; Josephus does not connect the Egyptian with the Sicarii.

[375] In Josephus *J.W.* 2.262 the circuitous route by which the Egyptian and his followers come to Jerusalem may refer only to the journey from the countryside villages in Palestine to the capital itself.

[376] E.g., Eusebius *HE* 4.2.4, which refers to the Jewish "king" in Cyrene during

The conclusion that clearly emerges from our analysis of pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai is that only a minimal amount of evidence can be found for Jewish pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai during the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. Pilgrimage to Mt. Sinai does not seem to have been an important means of affirming Jewish identity. Jews had many other ways of affirming a concrete physical connection with Jewish history, including the contemplation of their own biological existence. Later Gentile Christians may have felt more compelled to make pilgrimages to Mt. Sinai and other concrete sites associated with Israelite history because, unlike Jews, they could not point to their own physical descent to support their claim to being "the true Israel." Pilgrimage to sites from Jewish history was more of an identity imperative for Christians than it was for Jews.

G. *The Mt. Sinai of Early Post-Biblical Jewish Pilgrimage*

The previous sections of this discussion have demonstrated that any Jews in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods who showed an interest in visiting Mt. Sinai must have sought its location in northwestern Arabia rather than anywhere in the Sinai peninsula. The stunning frequency with which modern scholars allude to "Jewish tradition" when arguing in favor of locating Mt. Sinai in the Sinai peninsula grotesquely misrepresents what little "Jewish tradition" there is concerning the location of this mountain.[377] No more helpful is recent speculation that the very existence of a Christian tradition identifying Mt. Sinai with a site in the southern Sinai peninsula is itself evidence of an underlying Jewish tradition placing Mt. Sinai in this area.[378] This patently circular argument is directly controverted

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the revolt under Trajan. Note that "king" could apply to Moses in Jewish tradition; see Ezekiel Trag. *Exagoge* 68–89 in Eusebius *PE* 9.29.5–6; Philo *Mos.* 1.60; 1.148–51, 334; 2.2–6, 187, 292; cf. Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, NovTSup 14 (Leiden 1967). See also Tcherikover in *CPJ* 1, pp. 86–93.

[377] E.g., cf. the support of "Jewish tradition" adduced in Pritchard, *Harper Atlas of the Bible*, 56. See above on Mt. Sinai in the preexilic period.

[378] E.g., Diebner, "Sinaitische Wallfahrtstraditionen im Vorchristliche Judentum?" 2.690–99.

by the actual evidence that does exist in both early Jewish tradition and early Christian tradition concerning the location of Mt. Sinai.

The LXX/OG, Demetrius, Josephus, and other Jewish sources that identify Mt. Sinai with a discernible location consistently place it in northwestern Arabia east of the Red Sea. This early Jewish tradition of locating Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia continued to find expression in a number of early Christian sources both before and after the growth of the competing Christian tradition that located Mt. Sinai in the southern Sinai peninsula. There is not a single piece of solid evidence that any Jew in the pre-Christian period ever located Mt. Sinai in the Sinai peninsula. The notion that Mt. Sinai was located in the Sinai peninsula must be understood as a purely Christian invention hardly different from the Christian identification of many other locations in the Near East with ancient biblical sites.[379]

One final question remains. What mountain did Jewish pilgrims visit when they went to what they thought was Mt. Sinai? Numerous attempts have been made to answer this question.

Similarities between ancient and modern names have often been used in the quest to pinpoint the location of Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia. For example, both Musil and Philby identified Mt. Sinai with Jebel al-Manifa, which is located near Wadi al-Hrob between Al-Badᶜ and ᶜAynunah.[380] Musil and Philby were led to this conclusion by the belief that the modern name of the wadi may have preserved the ancient name of Horeb. But names with which sites are identified by Bedouin in the desert are notoriously unreliable. Groups of Bedouin often quickly forget names when they leave an area and often give new names to local features when they move into a new area not previously inhabited by their respective group.[381] Philby admitted to finding no archaeological evidence in the granite peaks near al-Hrob to support his conjecture.[382]

Other scholars (especially in France and Germany) have argued that the biblical evidence suggests that Mt. Sinai was a volcano that was active in the period of the development and composition of the biblical text.[383] Jean Koenig and others have identified Mt. Sinai with Ḥala' l-Badr, an intermittently active volcano located near ancient Hegra (modern Mada'in Salih).[384]

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[379] For a complete discussion, see Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen.*

[380] Philby, *Land of Midian*, 222–24; Musil, *Northern Hegaz*, 263–64, 269, 296–98.

[381] Cf. Zuber, *Vier Studien*, 68–70, noting that in an area of northwestern Arabia where Philby's journey of 1951 overlapped with Musil's journey of 1910, Philby and his Bedouin guides were only able to make about 41 secure (and an additional 8 possible) identifications of the 102 geographical names mentioned by Musil, who also derived his information from Bedouin guides.

[382] Philby, *Land of Midian*, 222–24.

This position is weakened by the possibility that the volcanic imagery associated with Mt. Sinai in the biblical text simply may have been taken from a stockpile of traditional literary motifs. The purpose for which these motifs were introduced into the biblical text may have been to enhance the literary power of the biblical descriptions of the Sinai theophany. Volcanic imagery might not have been associated with Mt. Sinai until after the traditions relating to Mt. Sinai had already gone through a long process of growth and transformation. The volcanic imagery in the biblical text is not in itself sufficient to confirm the identification of Ḥala' l-Badr with the Mt. Sinai of preexilic biblical tradition.

This does not prevent one from arguing that Ḥala' l-Badr may have been identified with Mt. Sinai in later post-biblical Jewish tradition.[385] Jews who lived near Ḥala' l-Badr might have identified this mountain with Mt. Sinai to explain the volcanic phenomena associated with Ḥala' l-Badr. But inscriptions and archaeological evidence from sites near Ḥala' l-Badr provide no certain evidence for Jewish interest in this mountain in either the biblical or early post-biblical periods.[386]

Proposals to identify the Mt. Sinai of preexilic biblical tradition with other mountains in northwestern Saudi Arabia or in the adjacent areas of southwestern Jordan have not attracted many followers. The task of trying to discover the location of Mt. Sinai is greatly simplified in the case of this study because the scope of the search may be limited to the mountain(s) identified with the names "Horeb" and "Sinai" in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. The criteria for identifying Mt. Sinai that are suggested in the literature of these periods are much more restrictive than the criteria that may be inferred from the Hebrew Bible. The range of options available for locating the mountain that Jews identified with Mt. Sinai in the early post-biblical period is therefore much more limited than it is in discussions of the Mt. Sinai of the biblical period.

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[383] Cf. Zuber, *Vier Studien*, 15–59.

[384] E.g., Koenig, "Le Sinaï: montagne de feu dans un désert de ténèbres," 129–55; Koenig, "Localisation," 2–31 (part 1); 200–235 (part 2); Koenig, "Aux origenes des théophanies iahvistes," 1–36; Koenig, "Itinéraires sinaïtiques in Arabie," 121–41; Koenig, *Site de Al-Jaw*; cf. Gese, "Ἁγάρ," 81–94. Cf. Zuber, *Vier Studien*, 15–59.

[385] Cf. Knauf, *Midian*, 57.

[386] Koenig, *Site de Al-Jaw*, 148–236; Jacqueline Pirenne, "Le Site Préislamique de Al-Jaw, la Bible, le Coran et le Midrash," *RB* 82 (1975):34–69; Knauf, *Midian*, 57.

Identifying the Mt. Sinai of early post-biblical Jewish tradition requires that the following considerations be taken into account:

(1) The mountain must have enough similarities to the Mt. Sinai and Mt. Horeb described in the Bible to have attracted the attention of Jews in the early post-biblical period.
(2) The mountain must be in northwestern Arabia (LXX/OG, Demetrius, Josephus, probably Philo; possibly *Jubilees* and Paul; among later sources, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, *et al.*).
(3) The mountain must be near Al-Badᶜ (ancient Madyan; LXX/OG, Demetrius, Josephus, probably Philo; among later sources, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, *et al.*).
(4) The mountain must be the highest mountain in the surrounding region (Philo) or, more precisely, the highest mountain near the city of Al-Badᶜ (ancient Madyan; Josephus).

The fourth of these criteria is potentially decisive because it would limit one's options to just one mountain. One could of course entertain a number of different options if one assumed that Philo and Josephus were mistaken or had coincidentally made the same conjecture during the process of biblical interpretation. But if Philo and Josephus are taken at face value on this issue, then one simply needs to find the mountain of highest elevation near ancient Madyan, which is located at modern Al-Badᶜ. The only ambiguity that might remain is just how "near" to Al-Badᶜ the mountain would have to be. The mountain actually may have been closer to some other major city in antiquity because the association with ancient Madyan was clearly motivated in part by an attempt to correlate the location of the mountain with the biblical traditions about the land of Midian. But the distance does not appear to have been so far that it ever clearly suggested identifying the mountain with the environs of some other city. If one admits the caveat that potential ambiguities remain in the application of the fourth criterion, one should probably limit one's search to an area that would explain the consistency with which early post-biblical tradition associated Mt. Sinai with Madyan rather than any other city.

The only possible option in this case is Jebel al-Lawz. At 2580 m, Jebel al-Lawz is uncontested as the highest mountain in the region of ancient Madyan. Jebel al-Lawz also fulfills every other criterion stated above.

Jebel al-Lawz was first brought to the attention of the Saudi Arabian antiquities authorities in 1986.[387] In that year a number of rather intriguing finds were discovered at the mountain by a group of amateur archaeologists. Subsequent events resulted in the publication of a book written in a rather sensationalist mode that includes the only available descriptions and photographs of some of the sites at Jebel al-Lawz. This book is not a product of critical scholarship and must be used with extreme caution because of the numerous interpretive errors and misunderstandings that it contains.[388] Nevertheless, it raises some questions about Jebel al-Lawz that certainly require a fresh examination of what can be known about this mountain from more reliable sources.

The geographical and geomorphological features of Jebel al-Lawz make it an especially attractive choice for locating the Mt. Sinai of early post-biblical Jewish pilgrimage. Jebel al-Lawz is located only approximately 30 km from the site of ancient Madyan. The extruded basalt that darkens the top of the mountain is easily visible from the road that follows what was once the major overland trade route from Leuke Kome (modern ʿAynunah) to Petra. In the oddly blackened top of the mountain some Jews in the Second Temple period may have found a testimony to the burning fire and cloud of smoke that rested on Mt. Sinai when the Law was given. Only 5 km from Jebel al-Lawz and in the same mountain range is Jebel al-Maqla. Rising to 2425 m, Jebel al-Maqla is the second highest peak in the area of Al-Badʿ. The proximity of these two mountains might easily explain the persistence of traditions that distinguished Sinai from Horeb even after it had become common to identify them as one and the same mountain. Eusebius, for example, was content to reconcile biblical traditions about Mt. Sinai and Mt. Horeb by simply identifying these mountains with two different mountains located next to one another.[389] Eusebius may have simply made this distinction on the basis of conclusions reached in the process of biblical interpretation. But Eusebius also may have known of an older Jewish tradition that identified Horeb and Sinai with two high mountains located next to each other. This kind of relationship between two high mountains is precisely what one finds in the case of Jebel al-Lawz and Jebel al-Maqla. Since both of these mountains are located in the very heart of Midianite territory, this might even offer an explanation for the use of two different names in the biblical tradition itself.

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[387] Williams, *Mountain of Moses*, 169, 208–211. Philby, *Land of Midian*, 215, indicates no study of the mountain up through 1957. It was also omitted from the Saudi Arabian comprehensive survey in 1980; Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program [1980 survey]," plate 66.

[388] Williams, *Mountain of Moses*. Because Williams's photographs of sites in the immediate vicinity of Al-Badʿ can be identified with known sites near Al-Badʿ, Williams gives no reason to doubt the authenticity of the other photographs and his descriptions of the mountain. This is crucial because at this stage his photographs and descriptions of Jebel al-Lawz are essential to any discussion of this mountain. But one cannot always accept his interpretations. E.g., what Williams calls "Egyptian fronts" on the caves at Al-Badʿ in plate 19 actually belong to the Nabatean tombs long ago described in Musil, *Northern Hegaz*, 109–117; also Philby, *Land of Midian*, 219–22, 257–62.

The archaeological material from Jebel al-Lawz is much more difficult to evaluate because of the present state of research on this mountain. Sites on the mountain and near its base reportedly include a monumental building structure (possibly a temple); a large cave filled with inscriptions; foundations for twelve large towers or pillars; and a long line of widely-spaced rock cairns partly surrounding the base of the mountain.[390] Both the large pillars and the cairns are similar to rock cairns of uncertain use and often uncertain date found at other sites throughout northern and western Arabia.[391] Images of cattle, which are found in the rock drawings of numerous sites in northwestern Arabia from the Neolithic to the Iron Age, seem to have been especially popular in the rock art of Jebel al-Lawz.[392] In some cases the cattle of Jebel al-Lawz may have had a ritual function as they occasionally do at other sites.[393]

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[389] Eusebius *Onom.* 172 s.v. "Horeb"; cf. the discussion of Eusebius above.

[390] The following description relies primarily on Williams, *Mountain of God.*

[391] See Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program [1980 survey]," 65–71. Stone cairns, often apparently used to mark off enclosure areas, are known in the area from at least as early as the Palaeolithic period and are common up through the Hellenistic period and even later.

[392] Livingstone *et al.*, "Epigraphic Survey, 1404–1984," 128–44 (esp. 132, 144), plates 118–32 (esp. 126); Williams, *Mountain of God*, plates 12–14.

[393] Livingstone *et al.*, "Epigraphic Survey, 1404–1984," 128–44 (esp. 132, 144); Williams, *Mountain of God*, plates 12–14. Note that the so-called Hathor and Apis bulls identified by Williams are similar to other bulls found in Livingstone *et al.* (cf. plates 118–32, esp. 126).

These and other elements of the archaeological record from Jebel al-Lawz might suggest a number of contacts with Jewish traditions concerning the exodus. But it would be extremely tenuous to try to draw any conclusions from the archaeological evidence at Jebel al-Lawz until more is known of its date and origins. One can only hope that the little that is known about the sites at this mountain will be supplemented in future research and publications.

Jebel al-Lawz is probably the most convincing option for identifying the mountain with which Jews identified Mt. Sinai in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. But the present state of research on Jebel al-Lawz requires that this remain only a rather tentative hypothesis. It is nevertheless by far the most attractive hypothesis available.

Jebel al-Lawz may also be the most convincing option for identifying the Mt. Sinai of biblical tradition. Like many other mountains scattered throughout the Near East, Jebel al-Lawz is reportedly identified with Mt. Sinai in the legends of the local Arabs.[394] But the potential antiquity of the traditions associated with Jebel al-Lawz is without parallel in the traditions associated with other sites. The evidence discussed earlier in this study demonstrates that traditions relating Mt. Sinai to the site of ancient Madyan at modern Al-Badʿ extend at least to the time of the oldest portions of the LXX/OG in ca. 250 BCE. In contrast, the earliest solid date for the appearance of traditions locating Mt. Sinai in the southern Sinai peninsula is ca. 350 CE.[395] One cannot be certain whether the mountain identified with Mt. Sinai when the LXX/OG was translated is the same mountain identified with Mt. Sinai during the preexilic phases of the redaction of the Hebrew Bible. But perhaps it is time for research on the location of the Mt. Sinai of preexilic tradition to shift its focus to Jebel al-Lawz, which is associated with local traditions 600 years older than the traditions locating Mt. Sinai in the southern Sinai peninsula.

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[394] Williams, *Mountain of Moses*, 211.

[395] Solzbacher, *Mönche, Pilger und Sarazenen*, 105–121.

V. *Other Pilgrimage Sites*

A. *Jewish Festivals*

Pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the celebration of the major festivals associated with events of the exodus has already been discussed above. The traditional pilgrimage festivals were not the only festivals that were celebrated in collective expressions of Jewish identity in Egypt. But other festivals often expressed features of Jewish identity unique to a certain location or region. The attraction of these other festivals was therefore often limited in scope.

Many of the obscure festivals in *Megillath Taanith* that derived from the Hellenistic and early Roman periods were probably not celebrated by most Jews in Egypt because they marked events unique to the history of the Jews who lived in Palestine. Nicanor's day (the 13th of Adar), for example, may have been an important event for Jewish immigrants in Egypt who had themselves fought against the Seleucid general (1 Macc. 7:39–49). But it was probably of little interest in Jewish communities in distant Upper Egypt that had been established long before the Maccabean revolt. Even Hannukkah seems to have found only a reluctant acceptance in some of the Jewish communities in Egypt, possibly because of political ambivalence toward the unique claims of the Hasmoneans (2 Macc. 1:7–9). Purim may have fared only slightly better. But Purim does seem to have been adopted to serve as an expression of Jewish experience in situations of conflict between Jews and Hellenistic rulers in Egypt.[396]

The Jewish communities in Egypt also developed some festivals that were unique to Jewish experience in Egypt. In 3 Maccabees, for example, one finds a picture of one or more festivals celebrated almost universally by Jews from all over Egypt. But this picture probably exaggerates the scope of these festivals. Josephus probably is more reliable when he describes these celebrations in terms of a local festival in which Alexandrian Jews celebrated their deliverance from annihilation under Ptolemy Physcon (Euergetes II).[397] Other local festivals associated with specific Jewish communities in the Egyptian *chora* surely must have been celebrated. But unlike the festivals celebrated in the Jewish community in Alexandria, these other local festivals did not generate a literary tradition of broad enough scope to preserve their memory.

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[396] E.g., Haman is a "Macedonian" in Greek Esther 16:10, 14 (E 10, 14). Cf. Tcherikover, *CPJ* 1, pp. 24–25, 46.

[397] Josephus *Ap.* 2.49–56; cf. 3 Macc. 6:30–40; 7:13–20. Onias's military activity in Alexandria eliminates the need for Parente's hypothetical Jewish military outpost; Fausto Parente, "The Third Book of Maccabees as Ideological Document and

Perhaps the one festival that best epitomized the process of defining Jewish identity in Egypt for many Jews in Alexandria was the festival in which the translation of the Septuagint was celebrated on Pharos island.[398] Philo's allusions to light in his description of the festival suggest that the mythology of the festival was dominated by the Pharos lighthouse rather than any metaphor derived from Jewish sources.[399] The festival also must have derived much of its ritual power from the paradigmatic nature of the event that it commemorated. The image of the divine assistance given to the Septuagint translators reassured participants in the festival that God would assist them in the daily process of translating Jewish culture into Hellenistic forms.[400] Despite the importance of the literary achievement celebrated in this festival, this festival probably never attracted more than a handful of Jews from outside of Alexandria itself.

B. *Jewish Participation in Non-Jewish Cults*

Jewish participation in non-Jewish festivals was probably common when direct acts of polytheistic worship could be avoided or rationalized. For example, Philo and other Jews in Alexandria were somehow able to mentally disentangle the theater and athletic games from the context of the polytheistic religious cults with which the theater and athletic games were usually associated. Hence the theaters and athletic stadiums of Alexandria often included Jewish spectators and probably also Jewish playwrights, Jewish actors, and Jewish athletes.[401]

Historical Source," *Henoch* 10 (1988):143–82, esp. 169, 180. See Tcherikover, "Maccabees," 6–9.

[398] Philo *Mos.* 2.25–44. Cf. *Ep. Arist.* 301–311; Josephus *Ant.* 12.103–109.

[399] *Mos.* 2.27, 41, 44. On the lighthouse, see Susan Handler, "Architecture on the Roman Coins of Alexandria," *AJA* 75 (1971):57–74, plates 11–12; Achille Adriani, *Repertorio d'Arte dell'Egitto Greco-Romano, Serie C, Vols. 1–2* (Palermo 1963–1966), 1:103–106; 2, tavola 33.

[400] Philo believed that God had inspired the LXX translators just as God had inspired Moses; *Mos.* 2.37–40.

[401] E.g., Philo *Agr.* 111–21; *Cher.* 80–81; *Ebr.* 177; *Prob.* 26, 110–13, 146; *Prov.* 58; *Spec. Leg.* 2.230; Ezekiel Trag. *Exagoge*; *CPJ* 3.519. Cf. *Ep. Arist.* 284; *T. Job*

In the Hellenistic period, festivals associated with the Ptolemaic royal household sometimes drew Jewish visitors to Alexandria from distant parts of the kingdom (Josephus *Ant.* 12.196–202). The political and economic advantages of these visits apparently provided the rationale needed for expending such energy on honor to a human ruler. In the Roman period, expressions of Alexandrian Jewish loyalty to the Roman emperor were calculated to parallel the activities of the local emperor cult (Philo *Flac.* 49–51, 56; *Legat.* 132–33, 149–51, 157). Philo's descriptions of these expressions of loyalty make it clear that they were also carried out in a manner that would avoid compromising the Jewish law.

Despite the rationalizations and accommodations that were often made to justify these practices, some Jews may have felt that no rationalization was needed. Individual Jews sometimes participated directly in Hellenistic cults. Names of Jewish soldiers appear in three dedicatory inscriptions from polytheistic temples in Egypt.[402] The military context might raise doubt about the amount of independent action implied. But the most parsimonious explanation is that, like the others listed in these inscriptions, these Jews were proud of their devotion to Pan, Zeus, Apollo, and the other gods who were honored in the temples.

Evidence from Tell Edfu suggests that it was especially Jews in Upper Egypt who were drawn to Hellenized Egyptian cults. The undeniable evidence for this is apparently somewhat of an embarrassment to many scholars, who choose to pass over it in silence when summarizing the archaeological findings at Tell Edfu.[403] Jews had been living in Edfu/Apollonopolis Magna at least since the end of the Persian period.[404] Tax receipts from the Roman period suggest that Jews were concentrated in one quarter of the city.[405] This indicates

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27:2–5; Josephus *Life* 16; Martial *Epig.* 7.82. This may have been more difficult after 41 CE; *CPJ* 2.153 (= *P. Lond.* 1912). See Kerkeslager, "Maintaining Jewish Identity in the Greek Gymnasium," 12–33; Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 59–63; H.A. Harris, *Greek Athletics and the Jews*, Trivium Special Publications 3 (Cardiff Press, 1976).

[402] *JIGRE* 154, 155, 156 and notes.

[403] E.g., Tcherikover, *CPJ* 2, pp. 108–118; Kasher, *Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 161–67.

[404] Walter Kornfeld, "Jüdisch-aramäische Grabinschriften aus Edfu," *AAWW* 110 (1973):123–37.

[405] E.g., *CPJ* 2.194, 200, 202, 209, 212, 213, 216, 221, 328, 329, *et al.* See Tcherikover, *CPJ* 2, pp. 108–118.

that they still may have maintained a communal identity.[406] But this may have been little more than the vestiges of kinship relationships. Archaeological and documentary evidence gives the impression of a Jewish community almost thoroughly assimilated to Greco-Roman culture and strongly influenced by local Egyptian traditions.[407] For example, among the Jewish ostraca of the first century CE were found a large series of ithyphallic statuettes and erotic figural groups that seem to have been common in the homes of the Jewish community.[408]

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[406] One should note, however, that there is little support for Kasher's tendentious picture of a highly organized, unassimilated, independent Jewish community devoted to a "vital vibrant Jewish life" centered on the activities of the local synagogue; Kasher, *Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 161–67. There may have been a synagogue, but there is no certain evidence of one; see *JIGRE* 139 and comments (p. 231). The word "sage" (σο[φός]) in *CPJ* 1.139 (if this is even the right reconstruction) does not represent a normal title used for synagogue officials in any text contemporary with the papyrus (first century BCE) and would hardly justify Kasher's conclusion that one is dealing with "the Torah teacher in the synagogue." Even less convincing is Kasher's attempt to find what he calls a "translator" (<ἀ>να[γνώστης]) in this papyrus, i.e., one who read the Scriptures written in Hebrew and then translated and interpreted them for his audience. Kasher's reconstruction in this case requires an emendation and seems rather anachronistic. Jews in the city may have celebrated traditional festivals such as Sukkoth (the Feast of Booths), but the evidence is ambiguous. *CPJ* 3.452a, which seems to mention Sukkoth, may or may not come from Edfu. The presence of a synagogue and celebration of Jewish festivals would in any case hardly in themselves provide evidence of the anachronistic type of orthodoxy and the communal independence that Kasher describes. Kasher's entire argument throughout his book is built on a number of fundamental misconceptions that have been criticized in Gert Lüderitz, "What is the Politeuma?" *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Pieter Willem van der Horst, AGJU 21 (Leiden 1994), 183–225; Constantine Zuckerman, "Hellenistic *politeumata* and the Jews: A Reconsideration," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 8–9 (1985–1988):171–85.

[407] Contra Kasher, *Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 161–67. A more balanced perspective is presented in Tcherikover, *CPJ* 2, pp. 108–118, who notes that many of the names of Jews from the city indicate Roman citizenship, strong Hellenization, and an increasingly pervasive adoption of Egyptian culture. Evidence for Egyptian influence is already evident in the earliest known evidence from the community, which originally spoke Aramaic; Kornfeld, "Jüdisch-aramäische Grabinschriften," 135–37. But neither Kasher nor Tcherikover do justice to the archaeological evidence; cf. below.

[408] K. Michalowski, Ch. Desroches, *et al., Fouilles Franco-Polonaises Rapports 1–3: Tell Edfou 1937, 1938, 1939* (3 vols; Cairo 1937, 1938, 1950), vol. 3, pp. 125–26; see vol. 1, cat. nos. 29, 30; vol. 2, cat. nos. 67, 69, 71, 579; vol. 3, cat. nos. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. Note that the ithyphallic figure in vol. 1, cat. no. 29, is identified as Harpokrates by the excavators. Some of the erotic statuettes may have been associated with the business of the Jew who appears to have run a house of prostitution; see *CPJ* 2.387 and notes (p. 171). But the find sites of the statuettes do not seem to have been concentrated enough to limit them to just one house.

The homes in the predominantly Jewish quarter themselves have yielded pottery and lamps decorated with animal and Dionysiac forms, offering tables, a relief with Hathor and snakes wearing Egyptian royal crowns, female statuettes (some of which probably represent Isis), images of Harpokrates, bone objects that may have served as amulets, and other objects typical of the non-Jewish parts of the city.[409] Tcherikover's observation that "no object typical of the Jewish family life was discovered" was perhaps a bit too conservative.[410] His discussion of the evidence in Jewish names for the overwhelming Egyptianization of the Jewish community presents a more accurate picture.[411]

One may conclude that many Jews in Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu) were probably just as comfortable with participating in the local festivals at the temple of Horus-Apollo as they were with celebrating Jewish festivals.[412] The evidence from the Jewish community at Apollonopolis Magna suggests that polytheistic traditions reminiscent of the older practices at Elephantine may have continued well into the Roman period in some of the Jewish communities in Upper Egypt.[413]

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[409] Even if some non-Jews lived in this quarter, there can be no doubt that many of these objects came from Jewish homes because of the high concentration of Jews in this quarter. In addition, some of these objects were found together with Jewish ostraca. Unfortunately, the excavation report is not consistent in describing the specific provenience and one does not always know precisely where in the quarter the materials were found. Jews probably also lived outside of this quarter, but one cannot distinguish them from their neighbors at all in the archaeological record. For offering tables, see Michalowski, *Fouilles*, vol. 1, cat. no. 33, probably no. 34; pottery decorated with animal figures in vol. 1, cat. nos. 136, 170, 171; lamp with frog decoration in vol. 1, cat. no. 208 (in a home with Jewish ostraca); lamp with frog decoration in vol. 1, cat. no. 210; lamp in form of head wearing bunch of grapes (Dionysus) in vol. 1, cat. no. 213; the relief with Hathor in vol. 1, cat. no. 27; female statuette in vol. 1, cat. nos. 233, 234, 235 (possibly Isis), 236 (probably Isis); images of Harpokrates in vol. 1, cat. nos. 245, 246, 24; a small bone tablet or amulet and part of a necklace or amulet in vol. 1, cat. nos. 291, 293. Cf. also the wooden doll(s) and possible wooden magical lamella in vol. 1, cat. nos. 308, 309, though the date in these two cases is uncertain and may be too late to be relevant.

[410] Tcherikover, *CPJ* 2, p. 108.

[411] Tcherikover, *CPJ* 2, pp. 116–18.

[412] On the possibility that they still did celebrate Jewish festivals, *CPJ* 3.452a (with some doubt about provenance); and less likely, *CPJ* 1.139 and notes (pp. 254–55).

[413] Like other Jewish communities in Upper Egypt, many of which were founded by Jewish mercenaries, the one at Edfu dated at least to the Persian period; Kornfeld, "Jüdisch-aramäische Grabinschriften," 135–37. The Jewish communities of Upper Egypt may have been less affected by Hasmonean propaganda and the reactionary movements that grew out of the Maccabean revolt than the Jewish communities in Alexandria and other cities closer to Palestine; cf. Tcherikover, *CPJ* 1, pp. 43–47.

Additional evidence for this conclusion comes from inscriptions recording Jewish visits to the temple of Pan (Min) at El-Kanais.[414] This temple was located at a natural resting place in the desert a little over 40 km east of Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu) along the route from Apollonopolis Magna to the Red Sea.[415] "Pilgrimage" is perhaps a misleading designation for Jewish visits to this temple. People who came to the temple usually did so only to secure or give thanks for protection while they were in the process of journeys undertaken for other reasons.[416] In two of the Jewish inscriptions at the temple the authors explicitly identify themselves as Jews and direct thanksgiving to "God" or "the god."[417] The use of this term rather than "Pan" or some other epithet for Pan distinguishes these inscriptions from other inscriptions at the site. But the Jewish inscriptions are still placed near the temple among other inscriptions that direct thanksgiving to Pan. This makes it unlikely that these Jewish inscriptions were simply expressions of praise to Yahweh made by pious Jews who happened to be passing through the area.[418]

One possible explanation for these two inscriptions is that they represent an accommodation similar to the equation of Yahweh with

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[414] *JIGRE* 121, 122, 123, and possibly 124. *JIGRE* 124 is written on a column inside the temple. The reading [La]zar[os] is disputed by Horbury and Noy and admittedly uncertain. See André Bernand, *Le Paneion d'el Kanaïs: les inscriptions grecques* (Leiden 1972), 85–86 (no. 24 = *JIGRE* 124), 95–96 (no. 34 = *JIGRE* 122), 105–109 (no. 42 = *JIGRE* 121), 147–48 (no. 73 = *JIGRE* 123); plates 29.3, 37.1, 38.2.

[415] See Bernand, *Paneion d'El-Kanaïs*, 14–22.

[416] Cf. the inscriptions at the site giving thanks for protection and the common epithet "Pan of the Good Journey" (Πὰν Εὔοδος); e.g., Bernand, *Paneion d'El-Kanaïs*, nos. 2, 10, 13, 21, 22, 27, 28, 36, 37, 38, 43, 44, *et al.*

[417] *JIGRE* 121, 122 (= Bernand, *Paneion d'El-Kanaïs*, nos. 42, 34 respectively).

[418] Contra David Noy in *JIGRE* pp. 208, 212, the inscriptions cannot be interpreted without reference to their proximity to the temple, which was one of the few structures anywhere in the area. The fact that all but one of the Jewish inscriptions were placed outside the temple is irrelevant, because the non-Jewish inscriptions outside the temple were consistently used to express devotion to Pan. In addition, the few elements of the Jewish inscriptions that distinguish them from other inscriptions at the site would have been a rather inadequate way of signifying complete repudiation of the worship of Pan. The distinguishing features of the Jewish inscriptions may in fact have been designed to draw attention to the inscriptions because the Jews who made them were proud to recite their accomplishments on the journey and record themselves among the devotees of Pan. Other inscriptions from the site suggest that this was often the purpose of the inscriptions because they boast that the persons mentioned in the inscriptions have come to the temple more than once; e.g., Bernand, *Paneion d'El-Kanaïs*, nos. 49, 87, 89; possibly nos. 24, 73, 90.

Greek deities that sometimes appears in apologetic contexts.[419] This would explain both the avoidance of the name "Pan" and the willingness of the Jews involved to offer thanksgiving to the deity at a temple of Pan.

On the other hand, no such accommodation may have been intended. The other two possibly Jewish inscriptions at El-Kanais, both of which are of doubtful reading, might suggest that a Jew named Lazaros had come to the temple three times.[420] If this is the proper interpretation of even one of these inscriptions, then Lazaros might not have lived very far away. One cannot be certain of this, of course, because the temple was placed next to an international trade route that often carried travelers who had come from great distances.[421] But in view of the proximity of Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu), it would be reasonable to suppose that Lazaros lived there.[422] If Lazaros and any of the other Jews who left their mark at El-Kanais were from the highly assimilated Jewish community at Apollonopolis Magna, they may have been perfectly willing to leave inscriptions that expressed devotion to Pan.

The god who is honored in the Jewish inscriptions at El-Kanais could therefore be Pan. Even if the inscriptions that refer to "God" or "the god" were intended to refer to Yahweh, they might have been made after performing other rituals devoted to Pan. In this way the Jews involved could solicit assistance for their journeys from both Yahweh and Pan. The Jewish inscriptions at El-Kanais thus may, like the archaeological evidence from Apollonopolis Magna, provide testimony to Jewish polytheism in Upper Egypt.

The relative proportion of Jews who directly engaged in polytheistic worship was probably significantly smaller in Alexandria and Lower Egypt. Third Maccabees states that about 300 members of the large Jewish population in Egypt were willing to participate in the cult of Dionysus while the vast majority resisted this practice

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[419] Bernand, *Paneion d'El-Kanaïs*, 96, 107–108. Cf. *Ep. Arist.* 15–16; Aristobulus Frag. 4 in Eusebius *PE* 13.13.3–8; Acts 17:23–28. Contrast *Sib. Or.* 4:1–17, where the author borrowed the Sibylline oracle genre from non-Jewish contemporaries but carefully emphasized the distinction between Yahweh and Apollo.

[420] *JIGRE* 123, 124 (= Bernand, *Paneion d'El-Kanaïs*, nos. 73, 24 respectively).

[421] E.g., Bernand, *Paneion d'El-Kanaïs*, no. 8 (probably Alexandria). Cf. Steven E. Sidebotham, "Ports of the Red Sea and the Arabia-India Trade," 195–223.

[422] Cf. the visit by a native or son of a native of Apollonopolis Magna in Bernand, *Paneion d'El-Kanaïs*, no. 31.

(3 Macc. 2:27–33; 3:23; 7:10–15). This picture is probably unreliable in its details. But there is little cause to doubt that it gives a faithful representation of the approximate relative proportion of those who directly participated in Hellenistic cults. Evidence that a large proportion of the Jews in Alexandria and Lower Egypt sought to avoid actions that might be construed as idolatry appears in Jewish funerary art from Alexandria and Tell el-Yehoudieh, expressions of hostility to polytheistic traditions in Alexandrian Jewish literature, and Jewish iconoclastic activity.[423] Indigenous Egyptian traditions seem to have been especially despised.[424]

Third Maccabees probably accurately portrays the motives of many of those individuals who did participate in polytheistic cults. It states that they sought to secure the social and legal privileges of the elite (3 Macc. 2:27–33; 3:23; 7:10–12). Dositheos son of Drimylos, Tiberius Julius Alexander, and other Jews among the Hellenistic and Roman elite no doubt obtained their positions through various cultural accommodations.[425] It was these accommodations that led other Jews to accuse them of abandoning their ancestral customs.

Charges that an individual had abandoned the ancestral customs usually reveal more about the person making the accusation than about the way the accused individual defined his or her own relationship to the customs. For example, Josephus shifts from ambiguous reticence or even praise of Tiberius Julius Alexander in the *Jewish War* to open criticism later in the *Antiquities*.[426] This is partly due to the changes that had occurred in Josephus's own position at the imperial court during the interval between the writing of these two works. Perhaps in the same way, the semantic value of "Jewish identity" is also more a product of the setting of the researcher who attributes Jewish identity than it is a product of the individuals to whom it is attributed.[427]

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[423] On funerary art and tombs, see above. For hostility to idolatry, see, e.g., Philo *Post.* 2; *Contempl.* 8–10; *Dec.* 77; *Fug.* 90; *Mut.* 92–93; *T. Job* 5:1–3; Wis. 14:12–16:1; 3 Macc. 2:28–33; 7:10–16. For iconoclasm, see Josephus, *Ap.* 1.192–93; *T. Job* 5:1–3; *Sifre Deut.* 61. Egyptian polemics suggest that this occurred even within Egypt itself; Josephus *Ap.* 1.76, 249, 309–311; Yoyette, "L'Egypte ancienne," 133–43, esp. 136; cf. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3.38. Cf. Porten, *TAD* A4.8, esp. lines 12–13, which might suggest that Jews were with the armies of Cambyses in destroying Egyptian temples.

[424] E.g., Philo *Post.* 2; *Agr.* 62; *Det.* 165–66; *Contempl.* 8–10; *Dec.* 77; *Fug.* 90; *Sacr.* 48; cf. Josephus *Ap.* 1.223; 2.28–32; 65–67; 85–88.

[425] E.g., 3 Macc. 1:3; *CPJ* 1.127d and notes, pp. 230–31; Josephus *Ant.* 20.100. Cf. *CPJ* 1.4, line 2; Josephus *Ant.* 12.160, 239–41; 1 Macc. 1:11–15.

[426] *J.W.* 2.220, 223, 309, 492–98; 4.616–18; 5.45–46, 205, 510; 6.237–42. In contrast, *Ant.* 20.100–103 mentions Tiberius Julius Alexander's departure from the "ancestral customs" and implies that his administration was so poor that he was responsible for a famine.

VI. *Concluding Observations: Jewish Identity in Hellenistic and Early Roman Egypt*

This study suggests a number of conclusions regarding Jewish identity in Hellenistic and early Roman Egypt.

(1) First, Jewish pilgrimage traditions in Egypt demonstrate that Jews in Egypt shared elements of identity common to other Hellenistic immigrant communities in Egypt and elements of identity distinctive of Jews elsewhere in the Diaspora and in Palestine.[428] Jews in Egypt were "Greeks" (Ἕλληνες) in the sense that they participated in Hellenistic culture and took on numerous features of Hellenistic identity (cf. Isocrates *Panegyr.* 50; Josephus *Ap.* 1.180). At the same time they closely identified themselves with the customs, culture, and heritage of the Jewish people in Palestine. Jewish identity was expressed in pilgrimage to the Jerusalem temple and other sites in Palestine, devotion to ancestors associated with Palestine, cultural similarities between Jewish communities in Egypt and Jewish communities in Palestine, interest in traditional biblical literature produced in Palestine, celebration of festivals associated with the beginnings of Israelite history in Palestine, and numerous activities and beliefs that include some reference to the land of Palestine. The close relationship between Jews in Egypt and Jews in Palestine demonstrates the rationale for the ancient practice of identifying the Jews of Egypt as "Judaeans" (Ἰουδαῖοι), a term that was understood well into the second century CE to have geographical associations that are unfortunately lost in the

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[427] E.g., Talmudic tradition influences the use of "orthodoxy," "apostasy," and "Judaism" in Kasher, *Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, ix, 77–80, 86–88, 312–13, 335–37; Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 15, 18, 25, 51–63, 65–69, 76–77, 79–83, 196, *et passim*. Talmudic tradition was unavailable in the periods in which Kasher and Feldman apply these terms, however, so its use in defining what was and was not "Jewish" in those periods is rather anachronistic.

[428] Cf. Sterling, "'Thus Are Israel': Jewish Self-Definition in Alexandria," 1–18; Mélèze-Modrzejewski, "How to be a Jew in Hellenistic Egypt?" 65–92; Goudriaan, "Ethnical Strategies in Graeco-Roman Egypt," 74–99; Collins, *Athens and Jerusalem*, esp. 1–22, 102–117, 244–46.

modern practice of translating it with the word "Jew."[429] Jews in Egypt were both "Greeks" and "Judaeans" at the same time.

(2) Second, Egyptian influence on Jewish pilgrimage traditions in Egypt was usually (but not always) less pervasive than Hellenistic influence. This is precisely what one might expect given the requirements of upward social mobility under Hellenistic and Roman rulers and given the record of hostility between Jews in Egypt and persons dominated by Egyptian cultural ideology. Most features of Egyptian identity were not appealing to most Jews in Egypt.

(3) Third, continuities with ancient Israelite pilgrimage traditions may be observed on a limited scale. Individual ritual needs, geographical distance, economic limitations, conflict over ritual forms, kinship affiliation, disputes about the unique privileges of the Jerusalem temple, and other dynamics that had operated during the preexilic period continued to generate new and diverse pilgrimage traditions in the Jewish communities of Greco-Roman Egypt. But in progressing through the Second Temple Period pilgrimage traditions became

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[429] E.g., Josephus *Ap.* 1.179; cf. the geographical use of the term in John 11:7–8; Cassius Dio *Hist. Rom.* 37.16.5; and elsewhere. See Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," 35–54, who notes that the term often has a strongly geographical connotation; cf. Kraemer, "Jewish Tuna and Christian Fish," 144. See especially Shaye J.D. Cohen, "Ioudaios: 'Judaean' and 'Jew' in Susanna, First Maccabees, and Second Maccabees," *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag* (hrsg. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, und Peter Schäfer; Tübingen 1996) 1:211–20, and the other articles by Cohen that he cites in this article, all of which will be in a future collection of his essays. See also John Ashton, "The Identity and Function of the Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel," *NovT* 27 (1985):40–75; A.T. Kraabel, "The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions," *JJS* 33 (1982):445–64, esp. 454–55; Malcom Lowe, "Ἰουδαῖοι of the Apocrypha," *NovT* 23 (1981):56–90; Malcom Lowe, "Who Were the Ἰουδαῖοι?" *NovT* 18 (1976):101–130. In contrast, Williams, "Meaning and Function of *Ioudaios*," 249–57, argues that Ἰουδαῖος and its Latin equivalent *Iudaeus* were terms that consistently and universally emphasized social and religious differentiation wherever they occurred. Williams's article grossly oversimplifies the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of the examples it cites and glosses over evidence contrary to its thesis. For example, Williams's quoted example on p. 253 from Cassius Dio *Hist. Rom.* 37.16.5 may have implied social and religious identity, but Dio clearly indicated that the geographical implications of the term explained its origins. Williams even admits that some examples from inscriptions have "a geographical derivation" (p. 250) and that other examples are probably not "doing any more than reflecting an awareness of ethnic difference" (p. 255). Geographical connotations often remain even when terms have become little more than pseudo-ethnic categories designating a class or a group with tenuous connections to its original family heritage. See the discussion of "Thracian" and other ethnic terminology used in Egypt in Goudriaan, *Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt, passim*; Goudriaan, "Ethnical Strategies in Graeco-Roman Egypt," 74–99.

increasingly subject to factors that tended to sharpen the boundaries of accepted practice in a way that created new traditions radically different from those associated with the polytheistic worship and ancestor cults of the preexilic period.

(4) Fourth, the degree of continuity with later Jewish and Christian pilgrimage traditions varies considerably according to the tradition under consideration. Talmudic tradition often developed emphases that were only in an inchoate stage of development in the Second Temple Period. In some cases rabbinic pilgrimage traditions may have been completely new innovations. Special caution must be applied when engaging in quests for Jewish precedents for Christian pilgrimage traditions. Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem and a few other sites was rooted firmly in Jewish sources. But Byzantine Christian pilgrimage to these sites often had a meaning quite different from older Jewish traditions associated with festivals affirming national identity and kinship relationships.[430] Internal Christian developments, such as the rise of a wealthy clergy that sought to confirm its power through expenditure on local holy sites, often played a far more important role than Jewish tradition in the growth of traditions of Gentile Christian pilgrimage to the purported tombs of biblical figures and other sites.[431] Christian traditions for identifying Mt. Sinai and many other sites were completely new innovations. The variety in the degree to which Christian pilgrimage traditions are based on Jewish precedents requires one to take more seriously the radical discontinuities with Jewish tradition that emerged in the transformation of the early Christian movement from a Jewish sect to a comprehensive religious system dominated by persons of non-Jewish origin.

(5) Fifth, it is extremely difficult to identify any one single focus as the ultimate criterion for determining the presence or absence of Jewish identity. Devotion to the Law certainly became a touchstone of Jewish identity in the self-understanding of some Jewish groups. But Jews who engaged in polytheistic worship were clearly violating one of the most frequently emphasized commandments of the Law. These Jews often

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[430] See Simon, "Saints d'Israël," 98–127. Cf. Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 30–42, who describes the redefinition of community in early Christianity that ultimately created pilgrimage traditions in isolation from and even in opposition to kinship communities.

[431] Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 33–42 *et passim*; cf. Satran, *Biblical Prophets*, 110–20; Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places*, *passim*; Marcel Simon, "Les Pèlerinages dans l'antiquité chrétienne," *Les Pèlerinages de l'Antiquité Biblique et Classique à l'Occident Médiéval*, 97–115.

still identified themselves as Jews but probably did not place devotion to the Law at the center of their own self-understanding.[432] For these and many other Jews, other elements of Jewish identity, such as physical descent from one of the twelve patriarchs, might have been far more important in the ways in which they understood their own Jewish identity.

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[432] Many Jews who did emphasize devotion to the Law may have understood it more in terms of a generic body of political and ethnic traditions rather than a system of religious halakah; cf. Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study*, SPB 39 (Leiden 1991), 96–106.

III

THE GREAT REGIONAL CULTS

ISLAND OF THE EXTREMITY: SPACE, LANGUAGE AND POWER IN THE PILGRIMAGE TRADITIONS OF PHILAE*

Ian Rutherford

I. *Introduction*

It has always been known that the same sacred places, even the same festivals, can accommodate pilgrims from different religious traditions: in India, there are cases where the same sanctuary is shared by Christians and Hindus; in Sri Lanka Hindus and Buddhists attend the same festivals; in West Bengal Muslims and Hindus honour the same sacred tombs; in Morocco there are sacred places common to Jews and Muslims.[1] It used to be believed that the activity of pilgrimage serves to enhance a sense of common-identity among different groups of pilgrims. But anthropologists have recently begun to favour the view that, rather than evening out the differences, pilgrimage is an activity which allows for and even encourages the expression of differences between different groups of pilgrims. The sacred space of the sanctuary is not so much shared between different groups of pilgrims as contested.[2]

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[1] Christians and Hindus: P. Younger, "Velankanni Calling: Hindu Patterns of Pilgrimage at a Christian Shrine", in E.A. Morinis, *Sacred Journeys: the Anthropology of Pilgrimage* (New York 1992), 89ff.; Sri Lanka and Buddhists: B. Pfaffenberger, "The Kataragama Pilgrimage: Hindu-Buddhist Interaction and Its Significance in Sri Lanka's polyethnic Social System", *JAS* 38 (1979):253–70; Muslims and Hindus in West Bengal: E.A. Morinis, *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition. A Case Study in West Bengal* (Delhi 1984), 38–42; these tombs are discussed also in P. van der Veer, "Syncretism, multiculturalism and the politics of tolerance", in *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism. The politics of Religious Synthesis*, ed. C. Stewart and R. Shaw (London 1994), 196–211; S.M. Bhardwaj, "Single Religion Shrines, Multireligion Pilgrimages", in Singh and

There were probably similar cases in the ancient world. Usually, the problem is proving that such patterns existed, given the exiguous sources that survive. It is different in the Dodekaschoenus, the strip of land running south from the First Cataract of the Nile. This was a border zone, claimed at different times by Egyptians, Ethiopians, Romans, Blemmyans and Nubians. Here, the same sanctuaries were visited by pilgrims from different cultures, including Greeks and Romans, and Ethiopians from the Meriotic Empire far to the south. The largest sanctuary in the region is Philae (*pꜣ-iw-rq*),[3] where pilgrimage is documented over a period of 700 years, from the Ptolemaic period to the 5th century CE; if (as I suspect) it goes back to the origins of the sanctuary in about 700 BCE, the total time-span involved is over a millennium

For the most part the evidence for pilgrimage takes the form of inscriptions, many graffiti, left on the buildings in the sanctuary. Their study comes up against various problems: the difficulty of distinguishing pilgrimages from other forms of visit (tourism? purely secular visits? passing visits made in the course of a longer journey); the difficulty of deducing from epigraphic evidence whether it written by a pilgrim or a local; and difficulties of historical interpretation.[4]

Singh (1987):105–116; R.L. Singh and R.P.B. Singh, *Trends in the Geography of Pilgrimages. Homage to David E. Sopher* [The National Geographical Society of India. Research Publication Series 35] (Varanasi 1987); Jews and Muslims in Morocco: L. Voinot, *Pèlerinages Judéo-Musulmans du Marocs* (Paris 1948).

[2] J. Eade and M.J. Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred. The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London 1991), 14: "The power of the shrine derives in large part from its character almost as a religious void, a ritual space capable of accommodating diverse meanings and practices—though of course the shrine staff might attempt, with varying degrees of success, to impose a single, official discourse. This, in the final analysis, is what confers upon a shrine its essential, universalistic character: its capacity to absorb and reflect a multiplicity of religious discourses ..."

[3] For the name, see below p. 233.

[4] Surprisingly, although there has been a great amount of work in recent decades on the history of the Dodekaschoenus in Ptolemaic and Roman periods, there is no comprehensive account of pilgrimage to Philae, or in the Dodekaschoenus. Studies that exists tend to cover either the Greco-Roman or the meroitic material, but not both.

But these difficulties are not insurmountable. And the rewards are great: the the data is rich, even richer since the dismantling of the sanctuary in the 1970's and its transportation from Philae to the nearby island of Agilkia revealed new evidence. In particular, this project affords the possibility of comparing and contrasting the ways in which pilgrims from different traditions relate to the sanctuary, for example in respect of types of formulae and position of inscriptions within the temple complex, and in respect of the differing attitudes to Isis they attest.

II. *Historical Background*

The shrine of Isis at Philae is not ancient in Egyptian terms; no evidence has been found that would indicate its existence before the 7th century. It seems that in an earlier period the sanctuary of Khnum on Elephantine had control of the Dodekaschoenus, but Philae replaced it in this position. The earliest evidence of religious activity at Philae concerns the god Amon of Takompso; a shrine in his honour was founded by the Ethiopian Pharaoh Taharqa (25th Dynasty, early 7th century BCE).[5] The possibility suggests itself that Taharqa founded a sanctuary on Philae facing towards Ethiopia as a sort of challenge to the established temple of Khnum on Elephantine. It may be significant that from the beginnings the main approach to the sanctuary was from the south, in order to welcome visitors from Kush.[6]

After the Ethiopian interregnum, Philae was absorbed by the Egyptians, and the earliest evidence for Isis-worship dates from this period: these are the remains of the so-called Kiosk of Psammetichus II (26th Dynasty), built in the early 6th century BCE.[7] The temple of Isis itself can be traced back no further than the Pharaoh Amasis (26th Dynasty, late 6th century).[8] At some point, the island immediately to the West, Biga (ancient Senemt), became identified as the burial place of Osiris-Sarapis, and this island was designated as the "Abaton" (iw-wʿb in Egyptian). Isis has a religious function in this island also as wife of Osiris-Sarapis; hence inscriptions in hieroglyphic, demotic Egyptian, Greek and Meroitic tend to invoke Isis as goddess by a double title as the goddess "of Philae and the Abaton".[9]

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[5] Taharqa: S. Farag, G. Wahba and A. Farid, "Notizie sa File III:. Inscribed Blocks of the Ramessid Period and of King Taharqa found at Philae", *Oriens Antiquus* 18 (1978):281–289.

[6] That point is made by Griffith, *Catalogue* ..., 42.

[7] A. Giammarusti and A. Roccati, *File. Storia e Vita di un Santuario Egizio* (Novara 1980), 58ff.; G. Haeny, "A Short Architectural History of Philae", *BIFAO* 85 (1985): 202, who suggests that the cult of Isis might have been imported by Psammeticus' troops from their native Sais.

[8] Amasis: see S. Farag, G. Wahba and A. Farid, "Notizie sa File I:. Reused Blocks 1. A Temple of Ammon at Philae. A Preliminary Report, *Oriens Antiquus* 16 (1977):315–324.

By the 4th century (30th Dynasty), the shrine seemed securely in Egyptian hands, and possession passed to the Ptolemies. But even in the hellenistic period Philae remained a contested space. Ethiopian interventions continued: the Ethiopian king Arqamani (Ergamenes) seized Philae again during the rebellion under Ptolemy V at the end of the 3rd century BCE; blocks stamped with the name of his successor Adhikhalamani were recently found at Philae.[10] Arqamani and the Egyptians both contributed to temple-constructions at Dakka/Pselchis; Adhikhalamani and the Egyptians to the Amun chapel at Dabod; these double contributions are probably evidence of alternating stages of work, not of collaboration, as has sometimes been thought.[11]

A permanent record of southern influence is the fact that in the later period the sanctuary at Philae included temples of two southern deities: the Ethiopian Arensuphis, and Manul-Mandaules, probably a Blemmyan deity; there is also some evidence for worship there of another southern deity, Thoth of Pnubs (or Pautnuphis). In this way, Philae formed a religious continuum with the rest of the Dodekaschoenus, where numerous sanctuaries scattered along the Nile (mostly on the West bank) reveal a rich blend of Egyptian and non-Egyptian cults; the Egyptian ones include Isis of Philae, worshipped at Kertassi and Debod; the non-Egyptian cults include Manul/Mandaules at Kalabsha-Talmis and Thoth of Pnubs at Dakka-Pselchis.[12]

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[9] For the Greek formulas, see Bernand, *Inscriptions* ..., 1.60–1, who says that the "official formula" was: ἡ ἐν τῷ ᾿Αβάτῳ καὶ ἐν Φίλαις ῎Ισις θεὰ μεγίστη; for the Egyptian ones, see A. Burkhardt, *Ägypter und Meroiten im Dodekaschoinos. Untersuchungen zur Typologie und Bedeutung der demotischen Graffiti* [= Meroitica 8] (Berlin 1985), 71–73.

[10] Adhikhalamani: A. Farid, "The Stela of Adhikhalamani Found at Philae", *MDAIK* 34 (1978):53–6. See G. Dietze, "Philae und die Dodekaschoinus in ptolemäische Zeit", *Ancient Society* 25 (1994):68–72 for history of the shrine); Haeny, *A Short Architectural History*, 201.

[11] E. Winter, "Ergamenes II, seine Datierung and sei Bautätigkeit in Nubien", *MDAIK* 37 (1981):509–13.

[12] Isis at Kertassi and Debod: G. Röder, article "Isis", RE 9 (1914):2084–2132, 2100; L.V. Zabkar, *Apedemak, Lion god of Meroe: A Study in Egyptian-Meroitic Syncretism* (Warminster 1975), 83; Manul at Kalabshah: *LÄ* 3.295–6; L. Török in R.T. Updegraff,

The construction of temple-complex at Philae reflects its chequered history. Hardly anything survives from before the Ptolemies, except for two contributions of Nectanebo 1: the gateway in the southern Pylon, and the so-called Kiosk of Nectanebo, now at the south of the island, having perhaps been moved there from an earlier position near the temple.[13] Some of the present temple was built by Ptolemy Philadelphus II, but there was a major remodelling under Ptolemy VI, around 200 BCE; stones bearing the cartouche of the Ethiopian king Adhikhalamani have been discovered in the foundations. The Northern Pylon dates from the same period. The great Southern Pylon goes back to Ptolemy VI, and was completed by Ptolemy XIII and the Western gate to Ptolemy VI; Ptolemy Philadelphus II had erected a small gate leading off to the right. The Birth House or Mammisi, on the left of the entrance, was the work of Ptolemy II or III, about 250 BCE. The temple of Arensnuphis at the Southern end of the island can be traced back to Ptolemy IV, the temple of Imhotep to Ptolemy V. The temple of Hathor (to the East of the sanctuary) was completed under Augustus; Trajan added a Kiosk ("Trajan's Kiosk"; also to the East); and Hadrian added a monumental gate at the west of the sanctuary, apparently a staging post for the second island, the Abaton.[14] Thus, Philae came to establish itself as the great southern sanctuary of Isis, rivaled only by the Northern sanctuary of Isis at Behbeit el-Haggar in the Western Delta.

During the Ptolemaic period, it seems likely that the name of the sanctuary was interpreted in the sense "friendly", with the implication that it was a point of peaceful coexistence between Egyptians and Ethiopians. The true significance and provenance of the name remains uncertain, though in the Coptic period, and perhaps before, it may have been interpreted as "The island of the extremity (Pi-iw-rq)."[15]

"The Blemmyes I: The Rise of the Blemmyes and the Roman Withdrawal from Nubia under Diocletian (with additional remarks by L. Török, Budapest)", *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988), 44–105, however doubts whether Manul was Blemmyan; Dakka: *LÄ* 1.987; so at Kertassi we find the obscure deities Pursepmunis and Sruptichis: *LÄ* 5.48–9. There is an account of these sanctuaries in L.A. Christophe, "Sanctuaires nubiens disparus", *CE* 43 (1968):17–29.

[13] Haeny, *A Short Architectural History* ..., 206.

[14] Griffith, *Catalogue* ..., 111

[15] For the Greek folk-etymology, see I. Lévy, "Sur deux contes étymologiques relatives à Philae", *Latomus* 5 (1946):127–130; for the Coptic reinterpretation (ⲡⲓⲗⲁⲕϩ), J. Černý, *Coptic Etymological Dictionary* (Cambridge 1976), 71; alternative etymology from *pꜣ-iw-rq* = "the island of time": L. Kákosy, "Zu eine Etymologie von Philae". Die "Insel der Zeit", *AAAH* 16 (1968):39–48.

Philae seems to have been under Roman rule from the time of Cornelius Gallus in 29 BCE (with a brief hiatus in 25 BCE) until the 3rd century CE. For most of this period, the border of the Roman Empire was at the southern end of the Dodekaschoenus at Maharraqa, ancient Hierasykinos. This situation came to an end at the close of the 3rd century CE when, according to Procopius (*Hist.* I.19.29–30), the Tetrarch Diocletian decided to move the border of Egypt (= the border of the Roman Empire) north as far as Syene because the area was no longer profitable, and called on the Nobadae to defend the Dodekaschoenus against the Blemmyans.[16] However, the situation in the 3rd century CE was much more complicated than this. The Ethiopians seem to have exerted considerable political influence in the area as early as the mid-3rd century CE (the only source for this episode are the pilgrimage-inscriptions on the temple); it is not clear whether this was a period of increased meroitic influence or of full meroitic control.[17] This may have been a difficult period, when stable rule of the sanctuary by the two major powers is threatened by Blemmyans. Historical sources give a picture of serious interventions by Blemmyans in Egyptian civil wars in the second half of the 3rd century CE.[18] However, the Ethiopians may have kept some power for a few more decades, especially since the name of the late 3rd century CE Ethiopian king Yesbokheamani is attested at Philae.[19]

For the last 140 years our knowledge of the sanctuary is even sketchier. The Theodosian Code, promulgated in 438 CE, aimed to shut down pagan sanctuaries in the Roman Empire. Scholars now believe its effectiveness was limited, and certainly Philae seems to have been more or less unaffected.[20] The Byzantine historian Priscus of Panium, speaking of a peace treaty with the general Maximinus in 452 CE (during the reign of Marcian: 450–57 CE), talks of a pilgrimage there by Blemmyans and Nubians to take away and return the statue of Isis.[21] If there had been any question of closing down the pagan sanctuary in this period, it seems likely that it would have been excused for military-strategic reasons, because to close the sanctuary would have been interpreted by Isiacs south of the border as a provocation. Pagan pilgrimage to Philae was still going on a century later when Justinian's general Narses finally suppressed the cult in about 537 CE. After that, Philae survived as a Christian center, in honour of St. Stephen the Protomartyr; in fact Christianity had already been established there for sometime alongside the pagan cult.[22]

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[16] On Diocletian's withdrawal: L. Castiglione, "Diocletian und die Blemmyes", *ZÄS* 96 (1970):90–103.

[17] See below.

[18] Updegraff, "The Blemmyes I ...", 69; J. Desanges, "Les relations de l'Empre romaine avec l'Afrique nilotique et érythréenne d' Auguste à Probus", *ANRW* 10.1 (1988):33–5; A.C. Demicheli, *Rapporti di pace e di guerra dell'Egitto romano con le popolazioni dei deserti africani* (Milan 1976), 127ff.

[19] D.A. Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush; the Napatean and Meroitic Empires* (London 1996), 196ff.; Burkhardt, *Ägypter und Meroiten im Dodekaschoinos* ..., 18; REM 0119, 0120, 1407; Ethiopians and Blemmyans sent an embassy to Constantine in 336 CE: Eusebius, *Vita Constant*, 4.3.

[20] Pagan survivals in this period are well set out by G.W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 1990).

III. *Phases of Pilgrimage to Philae*

The major sources for pilgrimage to Philae are graffiti and inscriptions left on the structures of the sanctuary. These are written in Greek, Latin, Egyptian (both hieroglyphs and demotic) and meroitic. There seems to be no evidence for visitation by semitic-speakers or Carian speakers, perhaps because the major period for semitic and Carian visitation to Egypt was during the 5th–4th centuries BCE; contrast the case of Abydos, where graffiti attest many Carian and semitic visitors.[23]

The walls of the temple buildings at Philae are covered in hieroglyphic inscriptions, religious texts of significance to local Egyptians. We might expect them to show evidence of the transportation of divine images from one Egyptian sanctuary to another, rather like the journey of Hathor from Dendara to Edfu to spend time with Horus at the *ḥb sḫn*-festival (Festival of Good Reunion).[24] There is little evidence for this sort of practice in the sacred texts of Philae, although they do speak of Isis being transported from Philae to the Abaton (Biga) regularly when the festival of Osiris is celebrated there.[25] This absence may be another sign that the sanctuary looks south, and is not linked in to the network of Egyptian religion. Equally, we might have expected ordinary Egyptians to have made pilgrimages to Philae, particularly on the occasion of festivals. They probably did, though we should not necessarily expect them to have left records. There *are* plenty of Egyptian graffiti in the sanctuary, several hundred in fact, but they probably date from much later, and most of them may have nothing to do with pilgrimage (see C below).

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[21] Fr. 21 in *HGM*, 1.332ff. (C. Mueller, *FHG* 4.100); F. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization, c. 370–529* (Leiden 1994), 2.225ff.

[22] Lasted till Justinian: Procopius, 1.19.36; Marinus, *Vita Procli* 19; Christian cult: P. Nautin, "La conversion du temple de Philae en église chrétienne", *CArch* 17 (1967):1–43; U. Wilcken, "Heidnisches und christliches aus Ägypten", *Archiv* 1 (1900): 396–436.

[23] For semitic and Carian visitors: *LÄ* 1:38–9.

[24] M. Alliot, *Le culte d'Horus à Edfou au temps des Ptolémées* (Cairo 1949–54), 2.448ff.; J. Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne" in *Les pèlerinages*, Sources orientales 3 (Paris 1960), 46.

A. *Ptolemaic*

The first evidence for pilgrimage at Philae is not Egyptian at all, but Greek. The earliest attested pilgrimages are by Ptolemies: by Ptolemy III Euergetes V (IGP4) in honour of Isis and Harpocrates, by Ptolemy V Epiphanes VIII (IGP8), in honour of Asclepius (i.e. Imhotep), and by Ptolemy VIII Eurergetes II (IGP17), in honour of Aphrodite.[26] Other early inscriptions, consisting simply of names, were discovered only when the temple was dismantled, and published by Roccati. One is by a Telexenus of Cyrene, in honour of Isis and Apollo (= Horus, a rare reference to this deity), from the pavement next to the temple of Arensnuphis, between the reigns of Ptolemy II and Ptolemy VI; another, same date and place, is also from a Cyrenean; another is from a Thessalian; another includes the names of an Cretan and someone from Aspendus.[27] Some inscriptions in Latin left by Romans are also known from this period, at least two dating from 116 BCE.[28]

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[25] H. Junker, *Das Gottesdekret des Abaton* (Vienna 1913), 1.9, 2.9; Isis represented as the solar ship: F. Dunand, *Le Culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerrannée, I. Le culte d'Isis et les Ptolémées* (Leiden 1973), 212–4. Notice also the *proskunema* (IGP39) in honour of Apollonius, builder of ships "for the transport of Heracles", though Heracles seems to be the Ethiopian Arensnuphis. Ph6 is by Pakhom, boatman of the transport of Harbeht, the great god, lord of heaven; Harbeht is Horus of Edfu.

[26] R. Merkebach, *Isisfeste in griechisch-romischer Zeit; Daten und Riten*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 5 (Meisenheim am Glan 1963), 67, says that there is evidence of a pilgrimage to Philae by Ptolemy IX Soter II in a fragmentary inscription from Elephantine (OGI168).

[27] A. Roccati, "Iscrizioni Greche di File", *Scritti in onore di O. Montevecchi* (Bologna 1981), 329–333. Telexenus of Cyrene is 1; the other Cyrenean is 2; the Thessalian is 3; the Cretan and Aspendus is 4; A. Roccati, "Nuove epigrafi greche e latine da File", in *Recueil d'etudes offert par les auteurs de la serie Etudes preliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain a Maarten J. Vermaseren*, ed. M.B. de Boer et T.A. Edridge, EPRO 68 (Leiden 1978), 3.988–996 includes another left by an Alexandrian.

Philae shows a wide variety of forms of inscriptions commemorating visits by pilgrims. Some are simple names; others express the bare statement: I, such and such a person, have come (ἥκω), as if arriving was an end in itself.[29] Others express the statement that someone makes a *proskunema* or "adoration", on his behalf and/or on behalf of other people (relatives or friends), in the presence of (*para*) the deity; such inscriptions are primarily found in Egypt, and it is possible that their form has been influenced by Egyptian inscriptions that begin: "The adoration of NN ..." (*t3 wšt.t* ...), or "May the good name remain here before Isis through NN ..." (rn nfr mni ty m-b3ḥ 'S ... n-ḏr.t ...); but it is also possible that the Egyptian practice imitates the Greek. In some cases they are left by locals, but in most cases the person who commissions the inscriptions comes from a distance. In exceptional cases, the same person leaves two *proskunemata*, as a certain Tryphon leaves one that is more official (IGP32) and one which is more personal (IGP33). It is unfortunate that we do not know the circumstances under which *proskunema* inscriptions were put up; did the priests vet them? Did the writer have to make a payment? were there professional scribes around to interpret the wishes of visitors? Was their dedication usually accompanied by the performance of a ritual, such as a sacrifice?[30]

The tradition of *proskunemata* begins in the early 1st century BCE; about then the area in front of the temple (the "dromos") is cleared and redesigned with a large open area, apparently to receive pilgrims.[31]

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[28] Roccati, "Nuove epigrafi ..."; CIL I2 4 2937a–b; I am grateful to John Morgan for the CIL reference.

[29] The formula h{kw is documented in G. Geraci, "Ricerche sul Proskynema", *Aegyptus* 51 (1971):3ff..

[30] Egypt practice imitates Greek: Geraci, "Ricerche sul Proskyneme ..."; complexity of *proskunemata* at Philae: at the Temple of Hatshepsut, the verb never occurs: Geraci, ib., 92; scribes: cf. the root *sẖ* in the index of Griffith, *Catalogue* ..., 304; ritual: sacrifice is assumed by Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization*, 2.226; cf. Ph366 and 368. For interference between pilgrim-formulas in different languages, compare the case of Greek μνησθῆ and Nabatean aramaic *daqir*, attested in some cases in bilinguals, from the Sinai peninsula: see A. Rehm, "ΜΝΗΣΘΗ", *Philologus* 94 (1940):1ff., and R. Solzbacher, *Monche, Pilger und Sarazenen: Studien zum Fruhchristentum auf der sudlichen Sinaihalbinsel; von den Anfangen bis zum Beginn islamischer Herrschaft*, Munsteraner theologische Abhandlungen 3 (Altenberge 1989).

[31] Giammarusti/Roccati, *File* ..., 62–3; Haeny, "A Short Architectural History ...", 228.

Most of them are collected and edited in two volumes of by André Bernand.[32] One pilgrim, the author of IGP27, came from Tarsus; another, the author of IGP47, came from Gortyn; Theodotus in IGP55 came from Patras. The author of IGP70 came from Mylasa; another came from "the Meander", presumably Caria (IGP110.2). Ision in IGP61 says he not only visited, but "spent time" there. Some seem to be by private individuals; others are by Egyptian officials including military administrators and honorary relatives of the Pharaoh (*sungeneis*).

Pilgrimage happened all year round, slightly more often in the months of Mechir (January–February) and in Phamenoth (March), when the weather was presumably more tolerable; surprisingly, it was not specially linked to the festival that fell in the month of Khoiak (November–December).[33]

From the 3rd century BCE the catchment area is broad, covering Greece, Southern Asia Minor, Crete and Cyrene. Do these areas reflect the spread of Isis-religion? Or are they areas within the Egyptian sphere of influence in the hellenistic period? Could some of these visitors have been θεωροί who came to the Alexandria Ptoelmaieia, and stayed to see more of Egypt?[34]

B. *Roman Empire*

Visits to the sanctuary continue into the Roman period. There was much activity in the early Empire: 28 BCE was a popular year (IGP129–133), and there were many visitors over the next 35 years. After that, the frequency falls off, though there are a number from the late 2nd century CE (IGP164, 165, 166, 168). Most of the inscriptions are in Greek; there is only one *proskunema* at Philae in Latin: IGP147.[35]

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[32] Bernand, *Inscriptions*, thinks the earliest is IGP14 (Achilles makes a *proskunema* on behalf of Eraton), dating from the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, but J. Bingen, review of Bernand, *Inscriptions*, *CdE* 45 (1970):407–8, puts it later.

[33] Bernand, *Inscriptions* 2.27. Contrast the timing of *proskunemata* at Luxor, which seem to coincide with the festival of the god in Pauni: see H. Riad, "Quelques inscriptions grecques et latines du temple de Louxor", *ASAE* 60 (1968):281–95.

[34] A papyrus from Egypt (P. Lond. 7.1973) is a letter from Apollonius to Zeno written in 254 BCE in which he asks Zeno to send chariots and similar stuff to Ptolemais for the πρεσβευταί from Paerisades and the θεωροί from Argos, who are coming to see the sights (κατὰ θέαν). One visitor to the Ptolemaia of 247/6 BCE came from Kalynda (P. Zeno 54; H. Volkmann in *RE* 1586); Zenon Papyrus 59341(a), and Plate VIII, in C.C. Edgar, *Zenon Papyri* 3 (Cairo 1928), vol. 3; discussed by R.S. Bagnall, *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions Outside Egypt* (Leiden 1976), 99–100.

There were official visitors (such as Cornelius Gallus, the Roman governor and poet [128B]), but many unofficial visitors as well. Some people identify their profession: one is a scribe (IGP129); Tryphon and Strouthios identify themselves as the κίναιδοι τοῦ θεοῦ (catamites of the god, i.e. Sarapis?) (IGP154–5); another inscription records the visit of a group of θιασῶται (IGP157); others were mimes (IGP252, 277); one was a litter-bearer (IGP260). Inscriptions by soldiers are not specially common (cf. IGP178; 184). A longer inscription (IGP168) located on the Gate of Hadrian records the pilgrimage there of three Alexandrians in 191 CE: Serenus, Felix and Apollonius the painter. Serenus is more forthcoming than usual about his motivation: he says that making a *proskunema* at Philae leads to good fortune and long-life (lines 1–2); that he was acting on the instructions of an oracle of Apollo (line 6), and that he has come to make and share in libation and sacrifices (lines 7–8).[36]

We might have expected the catchment area in the Roman period to be greater in comparison with the Ptolemaic period; however, if anything, it seems to be smaller; we do not find people coming from Asia Minor or Greece. One inscription, probably from the Empire, attests a visitor originally from Caesarea Panias in Palestine (IGP 170). This fall-off contrasts with the fact the cult of Isis became if anything more popular in the Mediterranean world during the period of the Principate. The reason for the discrepancy is unclear. One factor must have been that Egypt was a closed province, almost inaccessible for non-military visitors during the Early Empire. Another factor may be that, although the cult was popular, pilgrimage to centers of Isiac cult in Egypt was not a regular part of the religious practice of Isis-worshippers, whose religious needs were met entirely by local organisations. Finally, it is worth noting that the fall-off in numbers of pilgrims to Philai seems to find a parallel to the case of Roman pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the Kabeiroi on Samothrace; as Susan Cole has observed while the level of pilgrimage there was relatively high during the Late Republic, it seems to diminish during the Principate; the cause of the decline is equally mysterious.[37]

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[35] Other Latin inscriptions: IGP128 (Gallus trilingual); IGP163.

[36] Bernand, *Inscriptions*, 2.166ff., n. 168; Totti, n. 35.

C. *Demotic*

So far, I have talked mostly about inscriptions in Greek. Philae has also yielded a large number of graffiti in demotic Egyptian. This is unusual for a major Egyptian sanctuary. At Abydos there are hundreds of Greek graffiti, but virtually none in Egyptian (except for coptic inscriptions from the Christian period). At Deir-al-Bahari there are many in Greek, but only one or two in demotic.[38] A higher proportion of demotic graffiti is, however, typical of the minor sanctuaries of the Dodekaschoenus.

Some of the demotic graffiti at Philae are official records of agreements and statements made on oath unlike anything found in the Greek inscriptions (Ph57–59, 65 etc.; type 4 in Burkhardt (1985)). Others are shorter and reminiscent of Greek *proskunemata.* Common formulas they begin with are: *t3 wšt.t n* … ("the adoration of…"); and *rn-f mni m-b3ḥ* … ("May his name remain before …"); others are simple names (types 1–3 in Burkhardt). There is no equivalent to the Greek formula: "I have come", nor to the Greek practice of "remembering" ones friends and family. Demotic inscriptions tend to be in different places from the Greek ones, for example in the Mammisi (see section 4 below).

Griffith's view is that these are mostly left by locals, and not records of pilgrimages.[39] Some of them certainly are left by locals: religious officials connected with Philae, or artists engaged on the construction of the site (in somes cases, inscriptions are left by members of successive generations of the same family: see Burkhardt (1985), 32ff.). However, visitors from abroad could be responsible for at least some of them. That Egyptians from the Egyptian *khora* could visit Philae is shown by IGP158, comprising two Greek elegiac poems in which anonymous visitors from Koptos describe the arrival of sacred ships from the south (see below). Another instance in which a Greek inscription may record the pilgrimage of Egyptians is IGP174–7, where the pilgrims come from Pharemo, an unknown place, but probably in Egypt.

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[37] S.G. Cole, *Theoi Megaloi: The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace* (Leiden 1984).

[38] Abydos: P. Perdrizet and G. Lefebvre, *Les graffites grecs du Memnonion d'Abydos* (Nancy 1919); Deir el-Bahari: A. Bataille, *Les inscriptions grecques du temple de Hatshepsout à Deir el Bahari* (Cairo 1951).

[39] Griffith, *Catalogue*; Yoyotte, "Les pèlerinages dans l'Égypte ancienne", 55; H. Beinlich, s.v. "Wallfahrt," *LÄ* 6 (1986):1145–6 is also sceptical about Egyptian pilgrimage.

It is possible that some of the demotic inscriptions commemorate the visits of Egyptians who have come from a distance. For example, Ph80, from the colonnade, seems to relate to "a man of Tek who comes to Philae" (apparently earlier than the accompanying figure of Ptolemy Auletes); we do not know where Tek was, but it may have been some distance away. Another example, Ph449 is a record by a certain by Pakhom, son of Lucius, from an unassigned block. He says he has come with his family and talks of them being "all in misery together" (line 5: *iw-w thre n w' sp*). He asks Isis to be reconciled to him (*iw-t ḥtp n-y* in lines 8 and 12). He does specify his place of origin, but that absence need not indicate that he is a local.

In the case of bilingual visitors (or whom there must have been many), it is possible that they made a choice about whether to leave an inscription in Greek or Egyptian. Thus, the anonymous visitors from Koptos who commissioned the elegaic poem about the ships arriving from Ethiopia could also have left graffiti in demotic (perhaps they did). In no case is the same pilgrim known to have left both Greek and demotic *proskunemata*; however, it has been pointed out that the name of one of the pilgrims in the Serenus inscription, Harkinis, also turns up in the demotic inscription, Ph329 (on the upper part of the Second Pylon).[40]

Why there is such a high concentration of demotic graffiti in the Dodekaschoenus and at Philae in particular remains a mystery. Is the explanation that Philae had a higher than average status as a centre of Egyptian religion? Or is it that at a time when Greek was the usual language for written expression in Egypt, literacy levels in Egyptian were higher in this part of Egypt than elsewhere?[41] In particular, might many of these inscriptions be by pilgrims from the Dodekaschoenus, or even further south, where there was a strong sentimental attachment to traditional Egyptian writing? After all, demotic is the most common mode of expression for meroitic pilgrims, as we will see below.

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[40] Griffith, *Catalogue*. There are a number of bilingual *proskunemata* (i.e. in Greek and demotic Egyptian): Ph430: Petosiris (= IGP177?), on Gate of Hadrian; Harpaesis, IGP174–5, at the Gate of Hadrian; cf. Ph431–2, 200 CE; Asklepiades the sculptor, IGP182 = Ph302, from 265–6 CE (North Pylon); but perhaps none of these is pilgrimage inscription; they may have to do with the designing of the gate. In other cases, one may suspect that someone chose whether to write in Greek or in demotic.

[41] Literacy in Egypt: R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993), 231–260.

D. *Meroitic*

We saw earlier that Ethiopians made a contribution to construction of the sanctuary, and, perhaps as a result of this early involvement, the cult of Isis became well-established in Ethiopia itself. From the Roman period we find evidence of Ethiopian pilgrimage to Philae, partly no doubt a religious gesture and partly a reflection of political ambitions in the area.[42] Understanding meroitic pilgrimage to Philae is made harder by our uncertainties about the historical situation in the Dodekaschoenus in this period. From the early Roman period there is evidence that Ethiopians occupied positions as administrators in the Dodekaschoenus; it is not clear whether these were established administrators kept on by the Romans, or whether their presence indicates a level of joint rule between Romans and Ethiopians.[43] In either case, it follows that some Ethiopian pilgrims to Philae may not have begun and ended their journeys within the Dodekaschoenus. We have some direct evidence for such a route in the demotic inscription Dak30, dated to the early part of the 3rd century CE, according to which the ship of Isis was sent from Dakka to Philae on Thoth 4, the birthday of Isis, to celebrate the

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[42] Isis in Ethiopia: F. Snowden, "Ethiopians and Isiac worship", *Ant.Class.* 25 (1956):112–3; Žabkar, *Apedemak*, 17–21; J.W. Yellin, *The Role and Iconography of Anubis in Meroitic Religion* (Dissertation, Brandeis University, 1978), 105ff.; N.B. Millet, "Summary of Discussion", *Meroitica* 7 (1984):120; B. Porter and R.L.B. Moss, *Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings*^{2} (Oxford 1960–), vol. 7: on Qurtan, 50 (Roman temple of Isis with remains of New Kingdom temple); Buhen, 129–31 (North temple: Amenophis II on site of Amosis); Meroe, 234–5 (temple of Isis, early-mid meroitic); Wadi Ban Naga, 263 (s. temple is temple of Isis; no date); Qasr Dush, 294 (Sarapis and Isis, Domitian, Trajan); Ethiopian political ambitions in the Dodekaschoenus: E.Y. Kormyschewa-Minkowskaja, "Bemerkungen zur Religion von Kusch", *Meroitica* 7 (1984):1133. Qurtan and Buhen have New Kingdom foundations, the others are later.

[43] See L. Török, "Geschichte Meroes. Eine Beitrag über die Quellunglage und den Forschungbestand", *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988):107–41, 149–50; Burkhardt, *Ägypter und Meroiten im Dodekaschoinos*, 74ff.; inscriptions from Philae are Ph54 from 30 CE and Ph55 from 48 CE.

ʿyq-festival there. Thus, Dakka may have been the southern terminus for the pilgrimage, at least sometimes.[44]

The earliest sign of Ethiopian pilgrimage to Philae is an inscription in verse on the South Pylon, dated sometime between the 1st century BC and the 1st century CE, purporting to have been left by Egyptian visitors, perhaps from Koptos, who describe the arrival at Philae of Ethiopian ships carrying temples.[45]

> εἴδομεν ἐν Νείλῳ ποταμῷ νέας ὠκυπορούσας
> ἀξιθέους αἳ ναοὺς ἤγαγον Αἰθιόπων
> γαῖαν ἐς ἡμετέρην, πυρηφόρον, ἀξιθέωρον
>
> We saw on the Nile fast-travelling ships which brought the admirable temples of the Ethiopians to our land, wheat-bearing, worthy to look at

The most reasonable interpretation of this is that a group of Egyptian pilgrims make a visit to Philae on the occasion of the arrival of an Ethiopian pilgrimage from Ethiopia, and the occasional will presumably have been some sort of festival.[46] Another earlier piece of evidence is Strabo's testimony that the Sacred Falcon of Philae was brought from Ethiopia and that another was brought after it died "and even before"; the transportation of the sacred bird could well have taken place on a pilgrimage.[47]

Meroitic activity becomes much more intense from the late 2nd century CE. From this period date many long inscriptions, most of them relating to one complicated family, the family of Wayekiye, who clearly had some major role in the politics of this period.[48] Many of the inscriptions are dated; nevertheless, the history is very hard to reconstruct, especially because the main source for the history are the pilgrimage-inscriptions themselves. Historians agree that the context of these inscriptions is a period of increased meroitic political influence in the Dodekaschoenus. Some historians believe that for a brief period in the middle of the 3rd century the Ethiopians actually took control. Thus, Török divides the 3rd century history of the Dodekaschoenus into three main periods:[49]

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[44] C. Desroches-Noblecourt, "Dieux et temples voyageurs de Dakka en Nubie perdue", *Archeologia. Fouilles et decouvertes* (1964):8–16, 14; Dak30: Griffith, *Catalogue*, 26.

[45] FHN II 170; Insc. Phil. II 158. The inscription uses the language of "vision" traditionally associated with pilgrimage in the Greek world.

[46] Bernand, *Inscriptions*, objects a) that it is not clear that the destination is Philae; and b) that there is no reference to return. But neither factor seems significant.

[47] Strabo, 17.1.49; see W. Spiegelberg, "Ägyptologische Beiträge. III der Falkonkultus auf dem Insel Philae in christlicher Zeit", *Archiv* 7 (1924):183–189.; H. Junker, "Der Bericht Strabons über die heilige Falken von Philae in Lichte der ägyptischen Götter", *WZKM* 26 (1937):42–62, places it in the context of sacred texts from Philae relating to the falcon.

[48] For the family: Burkhhardt, *Ägypter und Meroiten im Dodekaschoinos*, 89–96.

i) Before the Ethiopians come to power, before, say, 230 CE: the first meroitic *proskunema* is that of Sesen, Ph223 in 190–1 CE (from the roof of the Mammisi).[50] Later on we have the record of Wayekiye's pilgrimage in 229 CE (Ph421);

ii) When Meroe take over the Dodekaschoenus in about 240 CE to 250 CE: the visits by members of the family are more like official visitations, though there is some element of ritual and religion. This is the time of the visit of Harentyotf, son of Wayekiye, who leaves a record of a visit in Dak30 and with his brother Manitawi in Ph410; he reports that visits at this period were yearly (cf. Ph411, Ph254, Ph257).

iii) A period of decline from about 250 CE, when the family of Wayekiye continues to be important, though real power has passed back to the Romans. The most important document from this period is the inscription of Pasan, ambassador to Rome in 253 CE (Ph416), acting on behalf of king Teqorideamani, who described how he came to Philae in Khoiak (November) of one month, and stayed there till Pharmenuth of the next year (April), when Abratoi, the king's son, arrived. A later visit by Abratoi(eis) is also described in a Greek inscription, IGP180 (Abratoeis) = Ph416. Similarly, visits of Tamis are recorded in the demotic Ph417 and the Greek IGP181, from 260 CE.

Other historians think that the contrasts here are too sharp. Burkhardt, for example, points to the high degree of continuity during the period attested by inscriptions left by successive generations of the same families. Instead, she suggests that throughout the period, control of the Dodekaschoenus was shared between Romans and Ethiopians, with a period of intensified Ethiopian influence in the middle.[51]

The demotic inscriptions recording visits of Ethiopians are longer than the typical demotic inscriptions. Demotic inscriptions left by Ethiopians tend to add either 1) a prayer, indicating personal involvement; or 2) information relating to an embassy. Ethiopians also left inscriptions in their own native meroitic. Such inscriptions occur particularly on the Gate of Hadrian, also in the Mammisi; sometimes, symbols of feet occur with them (MerIns).[52] The highest concentration of meroitic inscriptions occurs in one of the chambers on the right colonnade linking the First and Second Pylons, the so-called Meroitic Chamber (the temple of Isis itself was still out of bounds to graffiti-writers even at this late stage). Here are found images of a procession of Ethiopian pilgrims, drawn in a fairly rudimentary style, represented as carrying a palm;[53] the Meroitic Chamber is attributed by Török to the period immediately after King Teqorideamani in 253 CE.[54]

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[49] See Török, "Geschichte Meroes," 150.

[50] L. Török, "To the History of the Dodekaschoenus between ca. 250 BC and 298 AD", *ZÄS* 107 (1980):82; same writer on the Gate of Hadrian in Ph409.

[51] Burkhardt, *Ägypter und Meroiten im Dodekaschoinos*, 86–89.

Meroitic formulas are imperfectly understood (Griffith's translations are often optimistic in this regard),[55] but we can at least identify simple formulas that have parallels in demotic texts. Thus, we can establish that some meroitic inscriptions start with a formula "*tiwisti*", which seems to translitterate the demotic Egyptian t3 wšt.t; thus we can trace reflections of the same formula through three languages:[56]

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[52] L. Török "Meroitic Religion: Three Contributions in a Positivistic Manner", *Meroitica* 7 (1984):177, 180. On feet, also M. Guarducci, "Le impronte del Quo Vadis e monumenti affini, figurati ed epigrafici", *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia di Archaeologia* 19 (1942–3):305ff.; K.M. Dunbabin, "Ipsa deae vestigia. Footprints Divine and Human on Greco-Roman Monuments", *JRA* 3 (1990):85–109.

[53] G. Roeder, "Die Blumen der Isis von Philae", *ZÄS* 48 (1910):120ff., took this as an "Isis-flower", but L.V. Žabkar, "A Hieracocephalos Deity from Naqa, Qustul and Philae", *ZÄS* 102 (1975):143–153, 148, argues that it is a stylised palm; found also in connection with Ptiris (see below); Palms: found in inscriptions at Kalabsha, Dakka, Elephantine; H. Jaritz, *Die Terrassen vor den Tempeln des Chnum und der Satet. Architektur und Deutung; mit einerBearbeitung der griechischen und demotischen Inschriften von der Brustung der Chnumtempel-Terrasse von H. Maehler und K.-T. Zauzich*, AVDAIK 32 (Mainz 1980), 89, sees them as a symbol of life or death.

[54] L. Török, "Two Meroitic Studies. The Meroitic Chamber in Philae and the Administration of Nubia in the 1st–3rd Centuries AD", *Oikoumene* 2 (1978):217–37. The Chamber is Rm III on the diagram in Porter-Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, 7.212; cf. 7.221.

[55] For a more conservative estimate, I. Hofmann, *Material fur eine meroitische Grammatik*, Veroffentlichungen der Institute fur Afrikanistik und Ägyptologie der Universität Wien 16, Beiträge zur Afrikanistik 13 (Vienna 1981).

[56] On formulas, see N.B. Millet, "Summary of Discussion", *Meroitica* 7 (1984):113; L. Török, "Meroitic Religion: Three Contributions in a Positivistic Manner", *Meroitica* 7 (1984):178, who sees the formula *tiwisti* as a late development among other meroitic formulae.

Greek	τὸ προσκύνημα ...
demotic Egyptian	*t3 wšt.t* ...
meroitic	*tiwisti* ...

Another point of contact is that the meroitic inscriptions usually mention Isis "of Philae and the Abaton", just as the demotic and Egyptian ones do, though there is a telling variation of phonology (see below). One, MI125, is in honour of Aretates, which seems to be the Egyptian Harendotes (Hr-nt-yt-f) (cf. Ph410.3, 314.5, 37.2).

The variation of language is interesting. Ethiopians seem undecided about whether they should represent themselves as Ethiopian or Greek. In the case of the inscription of Pasan, Pasan himself reports the arrival of Abratoeis in 253 CE in a long Egyptian inscription, but Abratoeis himself records a second trip in 261 CE in a short Greek inscription (IGP180); was the prince Abratoeis affecting a higher level of discourse? (cf. the "Vision of Maximus" inscription from Kalabsha (n. 43 Totti), in which the speaker describes how Mandoulis charms away his "barbaric speech from the Ethiopians" (i.e. meroitic?) and chooses to inspire Maximus to compose a poem in good Greek (lines 23–26)).[57] Tami on the other hand, records his pilgrimages in both Greek and demotic, the demotic one referring to a trip in 253 CE, the shorter Greek one to 261 CE (IGP181). One interpretation is that the Ethiopians become more comfortable using Ethiopian as the centuries go on, presumably because they are more assertive of their own culture by the 3rd century. However, that is not the only possibility; experts on meroitic have noticed that the meroitic of the Meroitic Chamber is anomalous judged against the arguably purer meroitic of inscriptions found in the south; can we be sure that meroitic was the first language of the pilgrims depicted there?[58]

We can reconstruct a little about the religious context of the meroitic pilgrimages. Ethiopian pilgrims went to Philae in order to celebrate the festival of Isis, in particular to perform the "ʿyq-festival" ("festival of entry" or "festival of dedication", according to Griffith); the nature of the festival is obscure, but it had something to do with crossing from Philae to Biga (Ph421.12; Ph411.4).[59] These pilgrimages could have a political function, providing an opportunity for the Ethiopian state to make a display of its pomp and power; sometimes pilgrimages might have been a preliminary for a diplomatic mission; so Pasan and Harwoy, "the great envoys of Rome" (Ph416.1, 18), were perhaps on a mission to Rome.[60] But there are also signs of personal religious engagement; some pilgrims, like Pathores in Ph255 (cf. Ph257), pray to go be able to make the pilgrimage to Philae every year to do obeisance; the pattern is cyclical.

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[57] See the commentary on this text in Bernand, *Inscriptions*. There is a problem about whether Mandaulis charms his own speech or that of Maximus.

[58] Hofmann, *Material*, 57.

[59] No. 7, p. 133, no. 35, p. 138 in Griffith, *Catalogue* ..., index; Černý, *Coptic*

Meroitic pilgrimage to Philae could be very old indeed. Ethiopians contributed to the foundation of the sanctuary; their religious engagement might have continued even after they withdrew from Egypt, and the pilgrimage tradition could go right back to this period. There seems to have been a tradition within Meroe of Ethiopians making symbolic pilgrimages, including one to Musawarrat el Sufra, where there was a cult of Apemadak.[61] Admittedly, no evidence for such early pilgrimage to Philae survives. One reason for its absence might be that the sanctuary was largely rebuilt by the Ptolemies; earlier inscriptional evidence may well have been obliterated. But we should not expect that earlier enactments of the meroitic pilgrimage would have been recorded by graffiti in the same way that those of the 3rd century CE were.

Another indication of a continuous Ethiopian link to Philae from the earliest period is that fact that, as Griffith pointed out, the linguistic formula used in meroitic for the "Abaton" seems to be an earlier one from what we find in the demotic inscriptions. The meroitic inscriptions speak of

woš: pileqe-teli: woš: tebwe-teli

(Isis of Philae and Isis of the Abaton),

Here *tebwe* seems to equal the demotic Egyptian *p3-iw-w‘b*. The noun *iw* originally meant "locale" and was feminine, taking the definite article *t3*, which is the form that survives in meroitic; but in Egyptian, this noun was replaced by a noun of similar phonological shape,

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Etymological Dictionary, 3. The word comes from Egyptian ‘k "enter". Ph370.4 may mention a "cleansing festival", but the text is uncertain.

[60] F. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopian in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge 1970), 134–5; D.G. Haycock, "Later Phases of Meroitic Civilisation", *JEA* 53 (1967): 107–120.

[61] Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush*, 33–34.

meaning "island"; this second noun was masculine, taking the definitive article *p3*. This survival of the earlier form in meroitic may indicate that there was a continuous Ethiopian knowledge of Philae from a very early period.[62]

E. *Post-Meroitic Pilgrimage*

Two literary sources are crucial for this period. First, Procopius says that Diocletian created a common sanctuary for Romans, Blemmyans and Nobadai.[63] The detail that the name "Philae" = "friendship" is supposed to be derived from this hardly inspires confidence in this source, but it seems likely that the border was moved North to Philae at this time. Second, Priscus of Panium, fr. 21 in *HGM*, 1.332ff., speaking of a peace-treaty made in 452 CE, talks of a regular pilgrimage there by Blemmyans and Nubians to take away the statue of Isis to their own land, where they consult the oracle, and return it. Free access to Philae (which had been, and would continue to be excused from the Theodosian Code) was a condition of the peace-treaty. We have no reason to think that some such pilgrimage did not continue for the next 80 years until Justinian suppressed the pagan cult.[64] What we do not know is for how long the Blemmyans and Nubians had been making pilgrimages to Isis; perhaps since long before Diocletian.[65]

It would be natural to think of the Blemmyans and Nubians as having taken over the Ethiopian pilgrimage after the decline of the Meroitic Empire. However, we should bear in mind that the detail of taking the statue of the goddess south to consult the oracle and returning it again is not mentioned in Ethiopian sources of the 3rd century CE. So it would be safer to see the Nubian and Blemmyan pilgrimage as an independent tradition.[66]

The Ethiopian pilgrimage itself did not cease after Diocletian, though the form it continued in was probably a weakened one. A fascinating insight into the situation is provided by Ph371, dated to November 373 CE (from the obeisance of Patsinamre (son of) Pge(?))

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[62] MerIns 2.49.

[63] Procopius 1.19.34. Ph252, dated to 273 BCE by Griffith, documents a visit to Philae by a certain Jeho who seems to have been involved in a war against the Blemmyans.

[64] Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 146–47.

[65] IGP12 suggests early links between the temple of Mandaules and the Nubians.

[66] Nubians: see F. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization*, 2.231ff.

> … (6) In the year named (sic) the Belleu(?) attacked the Nubians(?) and gave (7) hostages(?) (took them prisoners?) in year 90 of Diocles. In the year named, the sky-boat of Isis (8) was far away for two years, and it reached the Abaton.

This seems to come from a period when Ethiopians are still sending delegations to Philae, but access is difficult. The "sky-boat of Isis" (*p wtn n 3s.t*) stays away for two years, presumably having been prevented from coming in one particular year.

From later on, we have many inscriptions by members of a family who were priests of Isis at Philae in the early 5th century CE. These appear in both Greek and demotic, perhaps in meroitic also. The ethnicity of the family is uncertain. Most of the inscriptions are located on the roof of the temple, one of the last areas to be colonised by graffiti. Many of these are probably the work of priests who lived in Philae, but one priest, Smetchen (IGP197), says that he visited Philae (IGP197: ἦλθα ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἐποίησα τὸ ἔργον μου ἅμα [I came here and performed my deed at the same time]), implying that he lived somewhere else, possibly among the Blemmyans or Nobadai. So here we seem to have at least one case of pilgrimage.[67]

Also from the 5th century are a group of Greek *proskunemata* (IGP190–192; cf. also Ph77) on the East wall of the portico between the Pylons (roughly the back of the "Meroitic Chamber"), written by visitors who call themselves "prophets of Ptiris". Ptiris seems to be a hawk-crocodile deity pictured with the graffiti, known also from other sites in Ethiopia. One of the inscriptions, by a certain Pasnous, is dated to 434 CE. These inscriptions may perhaps have been left by non-local priests who came on a pilgrimage from the south.[68]

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[67] See U. Wilcken, "Heidnisches und christliches aus Ägypten", 406; Bernand, *Inscriptions* 2; Smetchen is also attested in numerous demotic inscriptions. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization*, 2.233, suggests that one of these inscriptions, Ph332, dated 25th Feb. 439, expresses anxiety about the Theodosian Code promulgated the previous year. Meroitic inscriptions by a member of the same family are postulated by A. Burkhardt, "Zu späten heidnischen Priestern in Philae", in P. Nagel, *Graeco-Coptica. Griechen und Kopten im byzantischen Ägypten* (*Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg. Wissenschaftliche Beiträge* 1984/48 [I 29]) (Halle 1984), 77–83.

[68] Žabkar, "A Hieracocephalos Deity," 143–153; id. *Apemadak*, 106–117, believes that Ptiris is originally an Egyptian deity: Ḥr-imy-Šnwt; Bernand, *Inscriptions*, 221–226.

Schematically:

	Meroitic	Greeks/Romans	Egyptian		Blemmyan/ Nubian
			a) Greek-graffiti	b) demotic graffiti	
Pre-Ptolemaic	possibly	?	?	?	?
Ptolemaic	possibly	yes	yes	?	?
Roman	yes	not from outside Egypt	yes	?	?
3rd century	yes	?	?	?	perhaps
Post-Diocletian	maybe	?	?	?	yes

IV. *Philae as Contested Space*

As a sort of palimpsest to the history of the pilgrimage, we can trace developments in the location of pilgrim-inscriptions within the sanctuary. This is only practicable after the sanctuary was remodelled with the clearing of the dromos in about 100 BCE. Before then, free-standing monuments stood in the southern end of the sanctuary, but we have little idea of their significance within the overall plan.

From the time of the clearing of the dromos, we can trace two strands. First, Greek graffiti are mostly located on the South Pylon, usually facing south. While one might have expected that they would be written over whatever "official" inscriptions were already on the Pylon, in fact the sequence seems to be the other way round: the early *proskunemata* come first, and the "official" engraving relating to Ptolemy XIII is superimposed; it is interesting that it was not felt necessary to erase the earlier *proskunemata* when the "official" inscriptions were added; was there a religious reason for this? Were the *proskunemata* already inscribed regarded as part of the sacred fabric of the Pylon?

Proskunemata are also added after the "official" inscriptions. In rare cases, the relative position of *proskunemata* and official inscriptions may be significant: the elegaic poem of Junius Sabinus (IGP159), apparently dating from the age of Augustus, was positioned to the left of the foreward-extended left leg of Ptolemy XIII Auletes, as he smites the foe, on the West side of the south face of the South Pylon. This looks like a deliberate positioning, since the poem celebrates the arrival of Sabinus' military unit.[69]

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[69] See Bernand, *Inscriptions.*

Later, perhaps because the South Pylon fills up, they are found in other places, e.g. on the North Pylon (on the front wall of the temple),[70] in the colonnade between the temples, in the Kiosk of Nectanebo (IGP65). After the Gate of Hadrian was built, *proskunemata* began to appear there, for example that of Serenus and his entourage (IGP168). There are very few at any time on the temple itself, or in the pronaos.

The distribution of demotic inscriptions is quite different.[71] Some are found in the Kiosk of Nectanebo including Ptolemaic ones (some of these in honour of the Ethiopian deity Thoth of Pnubs; Ph11, 15).[72] Another location is the "Mammisi", the birth-house, located to the West of the approach of the temple: no Greek inscriptions have been found in the Mammisi (with the exception of IGP146 on the south wall), but it is one of the most popular places for demotic inscriptions, of which there are several hundred. Many of these may be by locals, but some could be by pilgrims who have come from a distance. How do we explain the absence of Greek inscriptions here? Were Greek-speaking visitors disinclined to visit the Mammisi? Or were they somehow forbidden from doing so?[73] Or is it rather that demotic inscriptions were discouraged on the Pylons? Or is it just a matter of conventions governing the language used for graffiti in the different buildings? Perhaps Greek-speakers wanted their dedications to be seen by Greek-speaking visitors, whereas the demotic inscriptions are all about personal religion. And the Mammisi is the most-sacred part of the temple-complex that Egyptian visitors were able to get into (they would of course have been barred from the temple itself).[74]

Another factor in the positioning of the inscriptions may have been the gender of the writer. There are a few *proskunemata* by women, but they occur only in honour of Hathor-Aphrodite, in the temple of Hathor at the West. The number of inscriptions that survives is small, but the pattern holds for both Greek and Egyptian data. Thus, the only surviving Greek inscription from there, IGP311, is by Tertia to Aphrodite; and of the three demotic inscriptions surviving from there, two (Ph.440–441) are by women. How are we to interpret this data? Was Aphrodite-Hathorperceived as a deity more appropriate to women's attention that the all-ruling Isis?[75]

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[70] The first, IGP135, is by Herakleides, an epistrategos; Bernand, *Inscriptions*, suggests that the position reflects that of an official proclamation: this was where Herakleides held court.

[71] Demotic: Southern Quay and Kiosk of Nectanebo 1:1–22; Approach to 1st Pylon: 1–46; Great Pylon: 47–76; Colonade between Pylons: 77–93; Mammisi: 94–242; Second Pylon: 243–330; Temple: 331–399; Temple of Arsenouphis: 400–407; Gate of Hadrian: 408–438; Temple of Hathor: 439–446; Miscellaneous: 447–450.

[72] Cf. also "the council of Thoth of the Nub tree" in Ph36; Griffith, *Catalogue*, 45; P. Boylan, *Thoth: The Hermes of Egypt* (Oxford 1922), 130; Zabkar, *Apemadak*, 83.

[73] NB Griffith, *Catalogue*, 86, of Chamber I of the Mammisi: "It is remarkable that all are in Egyptian, and that none but natives were admitted".

[74] For the significance of Mammisis, A. Badawy, "The Architectural Symbolism of the Mammisi-Chapels in Egypt", *CdE* 38 (1963):78–90; *LÄ* s.v. "Geburtshaus."

The distribution of meroitic inscriptions is different again. One (Ph403), was found in the temple of Arensnuphis, a marked location for an Ethiopian visitor; others were found on the North face of the West side of the South Pylon (Ph254–7); yet another (Ph403) is from the Temple of Imhotep. The largest ones were placed on the outer (Western) face of the Gate of Hadrian (Ph408, Ph410–11, Ph416, Pasan, from 253 CE; Ph421, Wayekiye, from 221 CE), as if to be seen by people returning from the Abaton. Thus, seems that in the 3rd century CE the Gate of Hadrian became the most prestigious location for pilgrimage-inscriptions, either because the South Pylon was full, or because the Gate of Hadrian was specially associated with Rome, or because the journey to and from the Abaton was now a more prestigious event than arrival at the sanctuary itself.

Ethiopians also leave inscriptions in their own native meroitic. Such inscriptions occur particularly on the Gate of Hadrian (MI119–122), but also in the Mammisi (112–113). The highest concentration of meroitic inscriptions occurs in one of the chambers on the right colonnade linking the First and Second Pylons, the so-called Meroitic Chamber (the temple of Isis itself is still out of bounds to graffiti-writers even at this late stage).[76] Here are found images of a procession of Ethiopian pilgrims are drawn in a fairly rudimentary style. Few graffiti had been left in this area hitherto, and we should probably see this development as a meroitic appropriation of space hitherto regarded as too sacred for use by visitors.

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[75] Cf. Griffith *Catalogue*, 15, n. 4 (?). Not mentioned in S.K. Heyob, *The Cult of Isis among Women in the Graeco-Roman World*, EPRO 51 (Leiden 1975). I find some confirmation of the link between women and Hathor in G. Pinch, *Votive Offerings to Hathor* (Oxford 1993), 96ff., 342–43.

[76] Török, "Meroitic Religion: Three Contributions in a Positivistic Manner", 174, says: "The earliest graffiti in Meroitic always occur on the pylons, the outer walls and in the outer courts of the temples ... No such restriction can be observed in the case of the later-"early" and "transitional", further "late"-graffiti, although the inner cult rooms of the temples obviously remain inaccessible to graffito-writers.

In the 5th century, another boundary was broken. It seems to have become possible to leave inscriptions in the shrine of Osiris on the roof of the temple. This is where the inscriptions relating to the family of Smetchen are found, in both demotic and Egyptian. Those relating to the god Ptiris are found in another neglected area on the East side of the colonade between the temples. In the Christian period, inscriptions are found from inside the pronaos of the temple (IGP205–214, on the southern wall).

To sum up: the differing distribution of inscriptions can be explained by two major factors: a) at any one time, different areas are used by different groups: the South Pylon for Greco-graphic visitors, the Mammisi for demoto-graphic ones, the temple of Hathor for women; b) diachronically, there is a gradual encroachment closer to the temple itself, from the Second Pylon to the roof of the temple itself. Within this framework, two types of competition for space could theoretically have arisen: between different groups of visitors for different areas of the sanctuary, and between visitors and temple authorities. Of the former I see no sign; however, it seems likely that competition of the second sort occurred, as successive generations of inscriptions crept closer to the sanctum sanctorum. The complex relative deployment of *proskunemata* and "official inscriptions" on the Second Pylon could be an early example of "contested space".

V. *Attitudes to Isis*

In view of the richness of the data, an obvious question that arises is: what comparisons or contrasts can be detected between attitudes to Isis portrayed in pilgrimage inscriptions left by different groups, in different languages or in different positions? This is a difficult question to answer, because many of the inscriptions are unforthcoming about their attitude to religion.

Greeks and Romans commemorate their visits to Philae with *proskunema*-inscriptions displayed in conspicuous places. These show little sign of personal involvement in Isiac religion, with the exception of the *proskunema* of Serenus (IGP168); a few others appeal to the "benevolence" (εὐχαριστία) of the deity (IGP174, 184, 271); there is no sign that Isis or any other deity at Philae was approached as a healing deity. Furthermore, the visits of Greeks and Romans do not coincide with the festivals, and there is no ritual dimension, unless the act of leaving a *proskunema* itself counts as a ritual. Greek inscriptions left at sanctuaries avoid making strong religious statements; the most they do is commemorate her with the conventional epithet "greatest" (μεγίστη). Unlike pilgrims to some other sanctuaries in Egypt, there is no sign that Greco-graphic pilgrims were curious about the true nature of Isis; no inscription experiments with connecting her with this or that Greek or Roman deity; contrast, for example, the case of the Blemmyan deity Manul/Mandaules at Kalabsha/Talmis, where the writer of an anonymous inscription records a vision of Mandaulis-Helios-Aion received in the temple (Totti, n. 40) and describes the motivation for his pilgrimage as desiring to know if Mandaulis was really Helios.[77] One might wonder if this is tourism rather than pilgrimage, although it is difficult to exclude some element of a religious motive.

Native Egyptian inscriptions are also pretty uninformative about religious belief, but it may be significant that they tend to leave their inscriptions not in the most conspicuous places, but in the more intimate environment of the Mammisi.

Ethiopian pilgrimage is quite different. The Ethiopian state seems to have sent regular delegations, at the high point every year. These organized or took part in major festivals, such as the ‘yq-festival, which Wayekiye talks about in Ph421 (cf. also Atenkituri in Ph411 and Harentyotf in Dak30). Like Greek inscriptions, many of the Ethiopian ones were displayed in conspicuous locations. Furthermore, some of the Ethiopian inscriptions suggest a personal religious engagement with Isis. We find much more detail than in the Greek inscriptions, for example in the inscription of Tami (Ph417), which begins (in Griffith's translation; cf. Burkhardt (1985), 118):

> The obeisance of Tami, the *3rbtg'y3* of Isis before Isis of Philae and the Abaton, the great goddess, the good dame, the beautiful replenishment of the year abounding in wealth, mistress of the heaven, the earth and the underworld ...

Specifically, the language used by meroitic pilgrims suggests that they see Isis as a "helper" figure, a sign of personal religion; thus in Ph421 (inscription of Wayekiye; cf. Burkhardt (1985), 119).[78]

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[77] On the attitude to Mandul portrayed in this inscription, see A.D. Nock, "A Vision of Mandaulis Aion", *HTR* 27 (1934):53ff. (= *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart [Oxford 1972], 1.357ff.). This "exploratory" attitude is also found in some inscriptions in honour of Bes from the Memnonion at Abydos (e.g. Perdrizet and Lefebvre, *Les graffites*, 498).

[78] C. Onasch in F. Hintze, ed., *Musawwarat es Sufra*, Unter Mitw. von Ursula

> ... I worship before thee, bending the arm unto thee, (4) my mouth filled with praise unstinted. I kiss the ground to thee, adoring thy dignity, thine (5) awe in my belly. Hear my prayers thou mistress of the lands, thou mightiest of (6) all the gods. Come thou unto my prayers with thy face of graciousness which the gods rejoice to see; (7) hear my entreaties, my mistress, O Isis! and grant me strength to equal (?) that which (8) my elder brethren have done, and grant me favour and love and respect in the presence of the kings. (9) I am thy servant, my heart is right loyal, thou that hearest the entreaties of them that are far off [even as] them that are (10) nigh to thee, that protectest one against a multitude, putting thine enemy under thy favoured one ...

As an articulation of faith in the goddess, there no parallel to this in the Greek inscriptions at Philae;[79] if Greek-speaking visitors had religious feelings comparable to these, the conventions of the *proskunema* do not accommodate them. However, the heightened devotion of the Ethiopian inscriptions is reminiscent of Greek-Roman perceptions to Isis outside of Egypt. We think, for example, of Apuleius' account of Lucius' conversion in the *Metamorphosis*. Another point of contact between Ethiopian and hellenistic and Roman perceptions has to do with the link between Isis and navigation, a largely symbolic link in the Greco-Roman world in general (the aretalogies, the Ploiaphesia-festival), but a practical one in Ethiopian pilgrimage.[80]

Thus, while the attitudes towards Isis entertained by Ethiopian pilgrims differ little what we might expect to find from devotees of Isis

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Hintze, Karl-Heinz Priese [u.] Kurt Stark) (Berlin 1993), 230, n. 6; she compares the attitude to Apedemak in Musawarrat: id. 238ff.

[79] Or in the inscription of Pasan (Ph416. 16ff.): ... (20) ... our hearts hang upon thee on the way, to bring us to the path of life; and we cry unto thee at all times saying "hearken thou unto us". I am they good servant, Isis; there is no pa[th] (21) [without three (?)] ... my heart hangeth upon thee in Egypt, in Meroe and in the deserts.

[80] In particular, some Ethiopian officials who visit Philae have the title *pr mr msʿe n p mw* ("the general of the waters"), in meroitic *pelmos atolis*. Corresponding to the "general of the waters" in Ethiopian pilgrimage were the *nauarkhoi* and similar ritual figures known to have played a part in Isiac cults in the Greco-Roman world: I. Hofmann, "Einige Probleme der meroitischen Religion", *Meroitica* 7 (1984):128; id., "Zur Bedeutung des Titels pelmos atolis", *MNL* 17 (1976):36–40. For the *nauarkhos*, J. Gwyn Griffiths, *The Isis-book: (Apuleius, Metamorphoses, book XI)*, EPRO 39 (Leiden 1975), 260ff.; L. Vidman *Isis und Sarapis bei den Griechen und Romern. Epigraph. Studien* (Berlin 1970), 76–85; id., *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae* (Berlin 1969), 588, n. 130. C. Onasch, "Zur struktur der meroitischen Religion", *Meroitica* 7 (1984):135–142, argues that she never takes on her "international" role; there are no hellenistic traits (e.g. we never find anything resembling an "Isis-aretalogy").

in the Greco-Roman world, Greeks and Romans do not write up those sorts of attitudes in pilgrimage inscriptions. There may be various reasons for that: difficulty of getting access to Egypt for the average Isiac devotee; the fact that Greek and Roman interest in Isis was not focussed on the Egyptian centers of her cult, so that there is little tendency for Isiac initiates to visit Egyptian centers of worship; and finally, the fact that even when they do come, the convention was against them leaving revealing personal statements there.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE SHRINE OF SS CYRUS AND JOHN AT MENOUTHIS IN LATE ANTIQUITY*

DOMINIC MONTSERRAT

> I speak of Romans, and Galatians, and Cilicians, people from Asia too, Island-dwellers and Phoenicians, Byzantines and Bithynians and Ethiopians, Thracians and Medes and Arabs, Palestinians and Syrians and Elamites, in fact all the races that exist under heaven ...
> [Sophronius, *Miracles of SS Cyrus and John* 51 (*PG* 87,3: 3612)]

I. *Introduction*

The healing shrine of the martyrs SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis (modern Abuqir) about twelve miles east of Alexandria, was one of the two principal Late Antique pilgrimage centres in Egypt. Along with the shrine of St Menas at Mareotis (modern Abu Mena), it apparently reached an apogee of international fame and popularity in the sixth and seventh centuries CE, as the epigraph to this essay suggests. Given the proximity of Menouthis and Mareotis to each other and to important pilgrimage routes, pilgrims travelling to or returning from the Holy Land may well have visited both centres in the same journey. In striking contrast to the cult of St Menas, however, that of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis has left behind practically nothing artefactual or archaeological.[1] Also, the cult seems to have made little impact on the Coptic language sources, and the only substantial accounts of the shrine and its pilgrims are preserved in Greek, in the various works of Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem (c. 560–638 CE). As I shall go on to discuss, the historiographic problems presented by the sources for the cult of SS Cyrus and John are major, and are amplified because the site of Menouthis itself has such a complex status in the religious history of Roman and early Christian Egypt.

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In this article, papyrological references to Greek papyri follow the abbreviations of J.F. Oates *et al.* in *Checklist of Editions of Greek and Latin Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets* (4th edition, Atlanta, 1992). The text of Sophronius is that edited by J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* (= *PG* 87,3), incorporating some textual emendations suggested by Fernandez Marcos 1975 and Duffy 1984.

[1] E. Breccia, *Alexandria ad Aegyptum: Guide de la ville ancienne et du musée gréco-romain* (Bergamo 1914), 134–39. The excavations of Albert Daninos at Abuqir in 1917

In Roman times Menouthis was a widely renowned cult centre of Isis, who functioned there as an oracular, healing and generally soterial divinity for pilgrims from Egypt and further afield.[2] The famous Isiac aretology found at Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. XI 1380.63) gives Isis of Menouthis the epithet "truthful" (ἀλήθεια), perhaps because of the reliability of her oracles. The remains of high-quality monumental sculpture from the site, now in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, may point to the architectural splendour of pre-Christian Menouthis, as some literary sources also suggest.[3] In the late fourth century CE, the sanctuary of Isis seems to have escaped the destruction meted out to the local shrines of Sarapis, at Alexandria and neighbouring Canopus; and while a Christian presence was probably established at Menouthis by the 420s, it is also probable that the cult of Isis continued to function there into the last decade of the fifth century CE. When the shrine of SS Cyrus and John became fully established, Menouthis still maintained its function as a place of healing and pilgrimage, and just as before cures were brought about by incubation—sleeping close to the enshrined bodies of the martyrs. The saints of Menouthis usually appeared in dreams to the sick and suggested curative treatments, often homely items such as baths or applications of substances rendered potent by contact with the martyrs' bodies, especially the oil and wax from the shrine's

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seem never to have been published, and the recorded finds consisted mostly of pre-Christian monumental sculpture: see Breccia, *Alexandria ad Aegyptum*, 138. Other archaeological evidence from the site is collected by E. Breccia, *Monuments de l'Égypte gréco-romaine publiés par la Société archéologique d'Alexandrie sous les auspices de Sa Majesté Fouad Ier Roi d'Égypte, tome I* (Bergamo 1926), 25–30, 47–67, with plate XX, including some monastic gravestones and a fine seventh-century CE column capital.

[2] For the epigraphic evidence for Isis of Menouthis, see L. Vidman, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Religionis Isiacae et Sarapicae* (Berlin 1969), nos. 403, 556a (both from Rome) and no. 406 (all apparently late second-early third century).

[3] Rufinus IX 27. For the actual sculptures, see Breccia, *Alexandria ad Aegyptum*, 138, 165–6.

lighting devices.[4] Sophronius himself claims to have been cured of an eye complaint by the saints, and composed his detailed account of the miraculous healings at Menouthis, including his own, as an *ex voto.*

Menouthis therefore presents a striking continuum of religious usage. Previous studies of the site have concentrated on Menouthis as a locus of contestation between the different religious groups who worshipped there: devotees of Isis, Cyril of Alexandria and his Monophysite interpreters, Chalcedonians like Sophronius. More recent scholarship tends to the view that Cyril attempted to redirect the pagan healing cult of Isis at Menouthis by offering a Christian alternative, rather than to the older view that attempts to extirpate pagan worship there altogether were made in the early fifth century.[5] With growing Christianisation, Menouthis still seems to have remained a religious and political football: I shall go on to argue that the status and development of the shrine is closely tied up with the religious controversies that troubled Egypt between the early fifth and the mid-seventh centuries CE. As for the end of Menouthis as a cult centre, it is only possible to speculate given the lack of textual and archaeological evidence. The shrine certainly survived the depredations of the Persians in around 618 CE and seems to have been functioning after Egypt became Muslim. At some point the cult of SS Cyrus and John allegedly shifted to Constantinople and Rome; certainly there is no evidence for Menouthis being much used for cult purposes after the ninth century, which was also the case with the shrine of St Menas.[6] But details are missing. Eventually the sanctuary was abandoned and used as a source of building stone. After centuries of religious contestation and replacement, Menouthis' importance as a sacral space with a particular *numen* diminished and eventually disappeared.

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[4] See A.-J. Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien, Saints Cyr et Jean (extraits) Saint Georges* (Paris 1971), 225–7, and for more arcane remedies (perhaps suggesting that there was a dispensary at the shrine complex?) Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien, Saints Cyr et Jean*, 228–31.

[5] For the replacement theory, see e.g. S. Takacs, "The Magic of Isis Replaced, or Cyril of Alexandria's Attempt at Redirecting Religious Devotion", *ΠΟΙΚΙΛΑ BYZANTINA* 13 (1994):489–507; E. Wipszycka, "La christianisation de l'Égypte aux IV^{e}–VI^{e} siècles. Aspects sociaux et ethniques", *Aegyptus* 58 (1988):138–42; J.A. McGuckin, "The Influence of the Isis Cult on St. Cyril of Alexandria's Christology", *Studia Patristica* 24 (1993):291–99 and *idem, St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy* (Leiden 1994): for a comprehensive bibliography of older work on the Christianisation of Menouthis, see S. Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit* 1 (Wiesbaden 1984), 445.

[6] See Timm, *Christlich-koptische Ägypten* 1, 438–46 (s.v. Buqir), with references (footnotes 10–15); for the end of Abu Mena, see J. Drescher, *Apa Mena. A Selection of Coptic Texts Relating to St. Menas* (Cairo 1946), xxiii–xxxii; P. Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ: A Guide to the Ancient Pilgrimage Centre* (Cairo 1986), 10.

Whether or not it is helpful to interpret Menouthis in terms of continually contested sacral space, the uninterrupted religious investment at Menouthis and its neighbour Canopus suggests that both places were parts of a whole area considered to have a particular *numen*, an innate spiritual power and religiosity indivisible from the place itself. The etymology of the toponym Menouthis may hint at such a *numen*: a plausible derivation could be from Demotic *m‘3 n nṯr*, "place of the divinity", hellenised as Menouthis.[7] In trying to reconstruct this *numen*, so important to pagans and Christians alike, the lack of archaeological evidence from Menouthis is particularly frustrating. None of the remains in the area can definitely be recognised as the Christian shrines. The literary evidence does seem to suggest, however, that the old Isis shrine was at the boundary of sea and desert, perhaps in confirmation of Turner's theory of the "liminoid topography" characteristic of pilgrimage sites,[8] though we have no clue to its positioning. The orientation of cult buildings at pilgrimage centres can provide an important clue to their perceived "constituency" of pilgrims, as Ian Rutherford argues elsewhere in this volume: given that many of the pilgrims to Menouthis came from Alexandria, the shrine may have faced in that direction. In any event, the proximity of Menouthis to the centres of political and ecclesiastical power at Alexandria and, later on, to the important monastic centres of Tabennesiote monks and the Wadi Natrun, must also have added to its symbolic value and to the desireability of controlling it.

My intention in this essay is to consider Menouthis as a Christian pilgrimage centre in its Egyptian context, and so I will concentrate on two broad themes: the establishment of the Christian cult there in the fifth century CE, and the functioning of the cult in its heyday in the seventh century, based on Sophronius' accounts.

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[7] Menouthis as a toponym is attested at least as early as 124 CE in a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus: see *P.Oxy. Hels.* 18.6. A cognate personal name, Menouthos, is known in the third century: *P. Mich.* VIII 475.21, *SB* IV 7437, *SB* XVI 12497.3.47.

[8] V. Turner and E. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (Oxford 1978), 112–3, 200–1.

II. *The Establishment of the Christian Cult at Menouthis*

According to Sophronius, SS Cyrus and John were martyrs in Egypt during the persecution of Diocletian, Cyrus being a doctor or monk and John a soldier. There is, however, no evidence for them before the fifth century, when their remains are apparently translated from Alexandria to Menouthis by patriarch Cyril of Alexandria, some time during the reign of Theodosius II. The date of the establishment of SS Cyrus' and John's cult at Menouthis, and the significance of this for the Christianisation of Egypt, have been frequently debated, without any consensus emerging.[9] There are essentially two theories: that their shrine was established by Cyril of Alexandria sometime in the early part of his patriarchate, but at any event before 429 CE; or that it was established in the last years of the patriarchate of Peter Mongus, c. 489 CE, in connection with the ending of formal Isiac worship there. Discussion is based on two principal sources. The first is the Syriac translation of Zachariah of Mytilene's *Life of Severus*,[10] which gives an account of an Isis cult still operational at Menouthis, in some form, as late as c. 489 CE, without making any mention whatever of the Christian saints. The second is Sophronius' account of the life and miracles of SS Cyrus and John, written probably c. 620. The tenth century manuscript preserving the text of Sophronius also preserves some fragments of a speech of Cyril of Alexandria, delivered to the Tabennesiote monks of the nearby monastery of the Metanoia at the time of the translation of the relics of Cyrus and John from Alexandria to Menouthis.

These fragments of Cyril's oration, embedded as they are in Sophronius, may be important for determining when the Christianisation of Menouthis began in earnest. Apparently a church dedicated to the evangelists had been founded there by Theophilus (Cyril's uncle and predecessor as patriarch of Alexandria), but local Christianity may have been affected by the renewed strength of the Isis cult, perhaps after the destruction of the Serapeum in 391 CE. Cyril says: "We wished to bring assistance to all the local regions and especially the district around the church of the holy evangelists, because many people had gone off into other parts because there was no martyr shrine (οὐκ ἔχοντες μαρτυρίον), and even Christians were being led astray."[11] As McGuckin plausibly argues,[12] the Alexandrian church began to take an interest in Christianising Menouthis shortly before the onset of the Nestorian imbroglio in 429 CE. Therefore a shrine of SS Cyrus and John, whatever form it may have taken, would have been in existence at Menouthis for more than half a century before the events described by Zachariah of Mytilene took place there.

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[9] See e.g. C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity* (Baltimore 1997), 169–70, 327–9; Takacs, "The Magic of Isis Replaced"; McGuckin, "The Influence of the Isis Cult on St Cyril of Alexandria's Christology", and *idem*, *St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, 16–20, Wipszycka, "La christianisation de l'Égypte aux IV^e–VI^e siècles", 138–42; Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien, Saints Cyr et Jean*, 217–9, R. Herzog, "Der Kampf um den Kult von Menouthis", in Th. Klauser and A. Rucker (eds), *Pisciculi, Studien zur Religion und Kultur des Altertums, F.J. Dölger zum sechzigsten Geburtstage dargeboten von Freunden und Verehrern und Schülern* (Munster 1939), 117–24; L. Duchesne, "Les Sanctuaires Chrétiens d'Aboukir", *Comptes rendus du Congrès International d'Archéologie Classique, 2^{me} session* (Cairo 1909), 121–30, and *idem*, "Le sanctuaire d'Aboukir", *BSAA* 12 (1910):3–14.

[10] For the Syriac text, see M.-A. Kugener, *Sévère Patriarche d'Antioche 512–518, Textes syriaques publiés, traduit et annotés, première partie: Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique* (Louvain 1904), with French translation.

Some scholars[13] have perceived a problem in the fact that Zachariah does not refer to the Christian saints, their cult or sanctuary, in his account of overthrowing the Isis cult at Menouthis. It is suggested that Sophronius invented the speech of Cyril to provide a false authority to legitimate the antiquity of the shrine and therefore its prestige; or that the fragments of Cyril's oration are simply too exiguous for them to be informative about anything at all.[14] By implication, then, the Christian shrine at Menouthis must have been a much later foundation, certainly post-Cyril and therefore probably Monophysite, which could explain why the Chalcedonian Sophronius in c. 620 was anxious to provide an earlier lineage for the Christian cult there. If this interpretation of Zachariah is adopted, it also has implications for the vitality of pagan cults in Egypt long after the country was officially Christian.

It seems to me, however, that Zachariah's failure to mention SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis is not evidence for their shrine being founded there after Cyril's patriarchate: in fact, it seems quite plausible to me that Cyril did indeed institute their cult in the 420s. Cyril continued to be much concerned about the tenacity of Egyptian paganism, as revealed in his detailed refutation of Julian's *Against the Galileans*, written in 438 CE. Also, the ancient and numinous site of Menouthis may have became the focus for pagan cults around the metropolis after the major shrines at Alexandria itself were destroyed: a passage in the *Life of Severus* suggests that the Isis temple at Menouthis contained cult images brought from other threatened sanctuaries, such as Memphis.[15] If this was the case, then Cyril may well have felt impelled to try to impose Christianity on this embarrassingly pagan area so near the centres of ecclesiastical authority.[16] Also, there could be many reasons why the martyrium dedicated to SS Cyrus and John had gone into abeyance by c. 489 CE, when the events narrated by Zachariah unfold. After Cyril's death in 444 CE, the shrine could have been deprived of funds by his opponent and successor Dioscorus, who persecuted Cyril's remaining relatives and network of placemen. Maybe Dioscorus saw Menouthis as a place indivisibly associated with the family of Cyril and its dynastic ambitions, especially given the investment in the site by both Cyril and his uncle Theophilus.[17] And after Chalcedon in 451, the Alexandrian church is in such disorder for much of the rest of the fifth century that there would have been little scope for the cult of SS Cyrus and John to recover had it lapsed.

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[11] Sophronius, *PG* 77: 1101.

[12] McGuckin, "The Influence of the Isis Cult on St Cyril of Alexandria's Christology", 291–2, and *idem, St Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, 16–20.

[13] See Wipszycka, "La christianisation de l'Égypte aux IVᵉ–VIᵉ siècles", 138–42, developing the ideas of Duchesne, "Les Sanctuaires Chrétiens d'Aboukir", 124–8.

[14] Wipszycka, "La christianisation de l'Égypte aux IVᵉ–VIᵉ siècles," 142; "les fragments des deux homélies attribuées à Cyrille sont trop minces pour qu'on puisse trancher la question de savoir si ces homélies appartiennent vraiment à Cyrille."

Here the shrine of St Menas may offer an interesting corollary to Menouthis. The mid-fifth and early sixth century was the time of its greatest expansion, when the administration of the pilgrimage centre there was in the hands of the pro-Chalcedonians at Alexandria.[18]

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[15] Zachariah, *Life of Severus* (= Kugener, *Sévère Patriarche d'Antioche*, 29), though the text is corrupt here.

[16] Zachariah's story of Paralius shows how easy it was for young *savants* in Alexandria to go and "experiment" with paganism at Menouthis. The situation seems to be analagous in some ways to that at Athens (described by P. Athanassiadi, "Persecution and Response in Late Paganism", *JHS* 103 (1993):9), where Proclus, evading persecution at Athens, succeeds in reviving local pagan cults at Androtta in Lycia. Even the most partial ancient source allows occasional doubts about the authenticity of the cult of SS Cyrus and John to filter through, implying that Cyril re-discovered their remains rather too conveniently: put into the mouth of Gessius by Sophronius, no. 30 (= *PG* 87,3: 3513–20): for the significance of Gessius as a sceptic, see Athanassiadi, "Persecution and Response in Late Paganism", 20 and footnote 142.

[17] Well discussed by Tacaks, "The Magic of Isis Replaced", 500–7.

[18] Drescher, *Apa Mena*, xiii, xxi–xxii; Grossman, *Abû Mînâ: A Guide to the Ancient Pilgrimage Centre*, 9–10.

Available funds were clearly being channelled towards the shrine of St Menas, perhaps with a view to diminishing that of SS Cyrus and John. This extends to the textual record as well: SS Cyrus and John never developed the same kind of indigenous hagiography that grew up around St Menas, although most of the stories about him are admittedly later.[19] While I would not wish to push the argument about the textual silence in Coptic regarding SS Cyrus and John, it is striking that their cult, often presented as a parallel to St Menas in terms of importance, made so little impact on written sources, even antiphonaries and calendars, while St Menas is so well-represented. This perhaps reflects a general waning in importance of the shrine at Menouthis, while that at Mareotis gained prominence, becoming "the pride of the whole of Libya" (πάσης Λιβύης φρύαγμα) as Sophronius himself says.[20] In this hiatus of central control at Menouthis, pagans could have reactivated whatever remained of the Isis cult in the wake of Cyril's attempts to assert a more permanent Christian presence there.

So much for the religious and sectarian background to the beginning of the cult; what does Zachariah of Mytilene actually say about the Isis cult at Menouthis?[21] The context is his biography of the early life of Severus, later patriarch of Antioch. At the time of the events narrated, Severus may still have been wavering between paganism and Christianity, and had certainly not yet been baptised. Zachariah offers a parallel mini-biography of Paralius, himself still a pagan and a student at Alexandria, who is tempted to visit Menouthis on hearing how a recent miracle performed there by Isis is proof of the enduring power of her cult. Paralius made two visits to Menouthis, on each occasion seeing a terrifying manifestation of the goddess. Paralius was eventually converted, and the happenings at Menouthis were reported to Peter Mongus, who ordered a force to go and destroy the temple. Zachariah and Paralius were part of this delegation:

> We arrived at a building which was completely covered with pagan inscriptions. In one corner there was built a double wall. The idols were hidden behind this wall. A narrow entrance in the shape of a window led there, and it was by these means that the priest got inside

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[19] See Drescher, *Apa Mena*; L. Depuydt, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (Louvain 1993), 108, 336–37, 250–53.

[20] Sophronius, *PG* 77: 3596.

[21] Zachariah, *Life of Severus* (= Kugener, *Sévère Patriarche d'Antioche*, 27–31).

> to perform the sacrifices. Hoping that our investigation would come to nothing, the pagans got the help of the priestess who lived in the building—they were aware of the upheaval that had taken place in the city—and blocked the entrance with stones and lime.

The pagans had attempted to hide the recent changes to the temple's structure, but Paralius and the monks from Tabennesi accompanying him were not to be deterred. When they succeeded in breaking in, they saw fresh blood on the altar and other evidences of worship: incense, lighted lamps, and food offerings. The chamber was full of idols, which were carried away and (presumably) destroyed. The Tabennesiote monks "exorcised" the temple by chanting the psalms during an all-night vigil, and eventually dismantled some of the shrine, but Zachariah does not record any specific attempts to Christianise the space, such as by installing relics or creating a martyrium.

Zachariah certainly seems not to be describing a shrine driven underground, but a functioning temple, with priestly staff making regular offerings to the deity. He also implies that there was a pagan community living in Menouthis for whom the temple was an important focus.[22] In this context, the fact that Zachariah makes no mention of any Christian cults on the site seems neither here nor there. The emphasis of the story is on how exposing the folly of pagans increases the possibility for conversion; and while Zachariah certainly has a broader agenda of repudiating pagan cult practices like incubation, his account equally makes clear just how few details he knows about Egyptian religion and the Egyptian pantheon.[23] As for SS Cyrus and John, their cult could have fallen into abeyance by c. 489 because of ecclesiastical politicking and sectarian divisions at Alexandria; or, if it were still operating, Zachariah may have chosen to ignore the saints because he felt uncomfortable about acknowledging the level of pagan and Christian co-existence at Menouthis. The aftermath of the attack on the Isis cult in c. 489 might have presented an ideal opportunity for the ecclesiastical powers at Alexandria to resuscitate the cult of SS Cyrus and John. This could also explain why Sophronius in the seventh century is so anxious to establish their cult's origins back in the patriarchate of Cyril, and thus untainted by any Monophysite associations—especially since the shrine was certainly Chalcedonian-run by this time.[24] All things considered, then, the opinion of Delehaye on the cults at Menouthis, almost a century old, is still applicable:

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[22] Zachariah, *Life of Severus* (= Kugener, *Sévère Patriarche d'Antioche*, 31): "For their part, the pagans living in Menouthis thought and said that we would without doubt die during the night."

[23] Zachariah, *Life of Severus* (= Kugener, *Sévère Patriarche d'Antioche*, 35).

> Ce que nous savons de l'histoire de Menouthi au cours du V^e^ siècle nous oblige à conclure que la présence des deux martyrs n'opéra pas instantanément les effets que Cyrille en attendait, et qu'il fallut d'autres interventions pour extirper les restes du paganisme et donner au nouveau culte tout son essor.[25]

III. *Sophronius and Pilgrimage to Menouthis in the Seventh Century*

For pilgrimage and healing at Menouthis in the seventh century, we are almost entirely reliant[26] on the various writings of Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem. His relevant works are an encomium to SS Cyrus and John (*PG* 87,3: 3379–3422); an account of more than 70 miracles wrought by SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis (*PG* 87,3: 3423–3675, henceforward referred to by the miracle number within the collection), and a short *vita* of the saints (*PG* 87,3: 3677–3696). Sophronius' writing about SS Cyrus and John is difficult to categorise: it is partly literary and rhetorical tour-de-force,[27] partly testimony of his own gratitude to the saints for curing his ophthalmia, but it is also Chalcedonian propaganda, even though Sophronius himself denies this (no. 39, *PG* 87,3: 3572). In spite of his piety and robust pro-Chalcedon agenda, Sophronius' account preserves many details about the individuals who sought help at the shrine—details about their names, physical afflictions, social standing and places of origin that are invaluable in trying to piece together the experience of pilgrimage at seventh century Menouthis.

At whatever time it started to operate fully, in the fifth or sixth century, the shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis was certainly a major pilgrimage centre by the beginning of the seventh century. It seems likely that their shrine was specifically intended as such from the start, partly to provide a continuity of practices on the site,[28] and also because pilgrimage was to some extent a natural consequence of the veneration of martyrs' relics and the miraculous powers ascribed to them. As with the Isiac cult it eventually replaced, pilgrims to the shrine of SS Cyrus and John were international as well as local, making the shrine unusual within the general shape of pilgrimage to Egypt. Apart from those who visited St Menas, pilgrims to most Egyptian martyr shrines seem to have come from a fairly limited catchment area.[29] The other international attractions for pilgrims to Egypt were places not directly associated with a martyr cult, such as the ascetics of the Thebaid and the Wadi Natrun, or ancient structures biblically resignified: the Pyramids became the grain silos of the patriarch Joseph, for instance. One can only speculate on how the fame and renown of Menouthis spread: apart from the wonders wrought by its presiding saints, practical considerations, such as its proximity to other pilgrimage centres and routes, must also have played a part.[30] It is also worth remembering how the possibility of being healed at Menouthis must have figured in the minds of the people who went there, and how this prospect affected their responses to the saints and the physical environment. The miracle accounts in Sophronius make clear how visiting Menouthis was a last resort for the desperate, many of whom had already consulted doctors who could do nothing for them.[31] Given our data for Menouthis, something as evanescent as the pilgrim experience is inevitably going to be difficult to reconstruct: the evidence is very different to that from other Egyptian pilgrimage centres such as Philae, where the visitors' graffiti preserve a sense of what they actually expected from the site.[32] However, it is still worth considering this aspect of pilgrimage to Menouthis. While the extent to which we can empathise with individuals from the distant past in any cognitive way is problematic, a host of recent scholarship reminds us of the importance of reinstating human individuality and agency into the ancient world, and how the physical, the emotional and the experiential can be valid elements of historiography. Here I am going to concentrate on two aspects of Sophronius' writing about Menouthis: the structuring of his miracle cycle and its implications, and what his narrative says about the practical aspects of pilgrimage to the shrine, to which I shall turn first.

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[24] H. Gelzer, *Leontius von Neapolis: Leben des Heiligen Johannes des Barmherzigen, Erzbischof von Alexandrien* (Leipzig 1893), 63; see also H. Delehaye, "Une vie inédite de Saint Jean l'Aumonier", *AnBoll* 45 (1927):58.

[25] H. Delehaye, *Les Origines du Culte des Martyres* (Brussels 1912), 258.

[26] For the few other references to the shrine, see Timm 1984: 444. It is unclear whether the events narrated in an Arabic miracle story about Cyrus and John are taking place at Menouthis in Egypt or Monemvasia in Greece: see P. Peeters, "Miraculum Sanctorum Cyri et Iohannis in urbe Monembasia", *AnBoll* 25 (1906):233–40.

[27] On Sophronius' rhetoric, see J. Duffy, "Observations on Sophronius" *Miracles of Cyrus and John*', *JTS* 35 (1984):71–6.

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[28] Takacs, "The Magic of Isis Replaced," 501–4.

[29] Drescher, *Apa Mena*, x–xi.

[30] For pilgrim routes incorporating Egypt, see E.D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312–460* (Oxford 1982), 52–3, 77; on pilgrimages to the ascetics, see Palladius, *Lausiac History, passim.* Egeria also visited Egyptian ascetics, but this part of her narrative is lost.

[31] See e.g. the curing of Theodorus in no. 27.

[32] For Philae, see Rutherford's paper in this volume. As a comparison, pre-Christian pilgrim graffiti from the temple of Pan at el-Kanaïs are particularly informative about visitors' expectations: see D. Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Græco-Roman Egypt* (London 1996), 175, with references.

Sophronius' remarks about the physical appearance of the shrine[33] and how it was utilised by the pilgrims are the only sources in the absence of any archaeological evidence. It may be possible to look at the well-preserved ruins at Abu Mena as a comparandum to the vanished shrine of SS Cyrus and John, especially because the logistics of healing there were similar to what went on at Menouthis.

At Abu Mena the martyr-church, oriented west-east, was flanked by an extensive square to the north and a large paved hemicycle between the church and the enclosure wall to the south. Occupying the space between the curve of the hemicycle and the enclosure wall there is a series of small rooms, where pilgrims may have slept. On the north side of the square there were two-storey lodgings to accommodate pilgrims, built around an open courtyard, and further north of these, extensive bath structures, reflecting the importance of baths as a medium of healing in St Menas' cult.[34]

A similar general sequence of buildings may have been reflected at Menouthis, though probably on a smaller scale. Sophronius implies that pilgrims congregated in a court by the basilica in which there was a fountain or well (πηγή), whose waters sometimes brought about cures (see nos. 2, 13, 15, 20 and 64). There was a bath or tank (λουτρόν: e.g. nos. 9, 47, 51 and 52), perhaps referring to a bath buildings like the one at Abu Mena.[35] There were also other sanitary structures. Several of the miracles mention a latrine ('αφεδρών) located close enough to the church[36] for pilgrims in extremis to be assisted there by helpers (e.g. nos. 42 and 56).

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[33] Summarised by Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien, Saints Cyr et Jean*, 220–25.

[34] See Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ: A Guide to the Ancient Pilgrimage Centre*, 14–23 and figures 1–7 and Grossmann's paper in this volume.

[35] The Roman bath complex at Abuqir near al-Raml fort, popularly known as "Cleopatra's bath", is probably not connected with the Christian site.

To obtain the closest possible proximity to the martyrs' relics, incubation took place in various parts of the basilica itself rather than in nearby parts of the shrine. Miracles outside the shrine, without any incubation, were exceptional. Sophronius records only two such cases: no. 8, where the saints rescue Christodorus the *oikonomos* of their shrine from drowning by pacifying the winds over Lake Maryut, and that of Theopompus (no. 14), who arrived at the shrine too weary from his journey to drag himself into the basilica. He decided to sleep outside the church within the shrine enclosure (περίβολος) and try to get into the church the next day, but was rewarded with a dream of the martyrs the same night. Obviously the limited space of the basilica could become very crowded, and the general picture Sophronius conveys is of the shrine at night being filled with rows of expectant pilgrims lying on low beds (στρώματα). So in miracle no. 62 Rhodope, while sleeping in the basilica, sees a vision of SS Cyrus and John passing among the ranks of sick pilgrims there, apportioning cures. Overcrowding also appears in miracle no. 37, the healing of John the sub-deacon from Cynopolis in middle Egypt. The basilica (σηκός) was so full of pilgrims that he was forced to sleep in a part of the church Sophronius designates as the *hierateion*, "where all the pilgrims stay who cannot find another place because of the crowd of sick who are there" (ἔνθα καὶ πάντες οἱ ξενιζόμενοι μένουσιν τόπον ἕτερον διὰ τὸν ἐνόντα τῶν νοσούντων λεῶν μὴ εὑρίσκοντες). Festugière suggests that *hierateion* here means the *bema*, where readings from the gospels took place.[37] Presumably money could be useful to get away from these throngs and secure the most potent place for incubation, next to the entombed bodies of the martyrs themselves. This is the implication behind miracle no. 24, the healing of two women named Juliana. One was rich, and used her wealth to install herself near the tomb of SS Cyrus and John, lying comfortably on a bed, while the poor woman had to sleep on the ground outside the gate. Of course the saints healed the poor Juliana first, and the rich one only after she had abased her worldly self by emulating her poor namesake.

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[36] V.S. Crisafulli and J.W. Nesbitt, *The Miracles of St. Artemios* (Leiden 1997), 11–12 discuss the latrines at the incubation shrine of St. Artemius is Constantinople, and how they were used by pilgrims.

[37] Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien, Saints Cyr et Jean*, 220.

An interesting feature of these miracle cures is how strongly they are connected with the physical presence of the martyrs and their devotees *in Menouthis itself.* Other major thaumaturgic saints of this period, such as SS Menas and Artemius, are much more mobile than SS Cyrus and John, and their miracles take place in different and widely-scattered locations, as though they were imagined to be not so closely tied to their shrines.[38] In contrast, SS Cyrus and John nearly always operate out of their shrine complex. Virtually all their cures are bestowed on individuals who have slept in the shrine, where the cure is revealed to them. On the rare occasions when the saints appear to people outside their shrine, it is not to cure them there and then, but to bid them come to Menouthis to be healed, as in nos. 9 and 29. As I have already mentioned, only one miracle actually happens somewhere other than Menouthis itself (no. 8), and this is on Lake Mareotis, not far from Menouthis. Thus the spiritual power of SS Cyrus and John, while specifically stated to be universal in miracle no. 60, is also inextricably tied to their home locale. I wonder whether this localisation goes some way to explaining the lack of recognisable artefacts connected with their cult. Maybe sanctity was somehow considered to be associated with visiting Menouthis itself, rather than being dispersible via transported sanctified objects. It may be, of course, that such objects existed, but cannot be identified with the site: as Vikan points out, "of course the pilgrim eulogia could fully perform its function without the aid of art, and, to judge from Early Byzantine pilgrim texts, embellishment (whether images or words) seems rarely to have been brought into play".[39] Yet many of the major healing or protective shrines produced very distinctive iconographies of the eponymous saints (e.g. SS Menas, Phocas, Isidore of Chios, Simeon Stylites, Thecla); and the lack of any pilgrim *eulogiai* characteristic of Menouthis is perhaps surprising when we consider the proximity of the shrine of St Menas, which produced the most instantly recognisable pilgrim objects from the early Christian world. It may be that this lack of material culture again expresses the importance of the place and the strength of the martyrs' association with it. Uppermost in the mind of the ancient pilgrim was physical contact with the inherent sanctity of Menouthis, via the process of incubation.

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[38] For St Menas' "peripatetic" miracles in Coptic, see Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 108–25 and 150–59; for a summary of St Artemius', see Crisafulli and Nesbitt, *The Miracles of St Artemios*, xii–xv.

[39] G. Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Dumbarton Oaks 1984), 13.

As described by Sophronius, the visions experienced by the incubant sick in the church were of two kinds: those where SS Cyrus and John appeared to a pilgrim and effected a cure straight away, and those where they appeared in a dream to prescribe a remedy, which the patients obtained when they woke up. Most of the miracles fall into the latter category, and cures of the first type are specifically stated to be unusual. So in the account of the healing of the child Mena from Old Cairo (no. 41), Sophronius says that SS Cyrus and John cured the boy not through a dream or the giving of directions for medication, as was their usual method, but in full view (οὐ γάρ τόδε ποιεῖν δι'ὁράματος, ἢ τόδε προσέταξαν, ὡς ἔθος αὐτοῖς διαπράττεσθαι, ἀλλ'ὅτε ῥωσθῆναι τὸ παιδίον ἐθέσπισαν, οὕτως ἐπράχθη φανερῶς τὰ τῆς ῥώσεως). Occasionally they appeared to people who were awake, and again this is stated to be exceptional, as in miracle no. 52. Zosimus, a paralytic from Constantinople, prayed to SS Cyrus and John for three days and then went to be bathed. His helpers left him by the bath, and it was then that St Cyrus appeared to him alone, dressed in a monastic garment, "not in a dream, as he appears to most people, but in a waking vision, and just in the manner that he is represented" (οὐκ ὄναρ ὡς τοῖς πλείοσι φαίνεται, ἀλλ'ὕπαρ ὡς ἦν τε καὶ γράφεται). Waking visions of SS Cyrus and John also occur in miracles nos. 4, 19 and 33.

Sophronius evokes a vivid picture of the tensions among the pilgrims waiting for a cure at Menouthis. While most pilgrims bear their maladies stoically and wait quietly, others are difficult and fractious, a nuisance to those tending them.[40] George from Cyprus, for instance (miracle no. 56) is described as an "awkward patient" (ἐπαχθὴς ἄρρωστος), demanding to be taken back and forth from the sanctuary to the latrines. Others were jealous when their fellow pilgrims were cured, while they still had to wait. In no. 42 Eugenius, an Egyptian, came to the shrine because he was afflicted with chronic constipation. He obtained the premium position for incubation, sleeping in front of the tomb of the saints (πρὸ τοῦ τάφου τῶν ἁγίων κοιμώμενος) and was cured immediately. Three women who have been staying at the shrine for a year in the hope of a miracle protest at the injustice of Eugenius' fast cure. The martyrs appear and tell the women that they do not decide who will be cured, but merely channel the healing power of Christ, who makes the decisions. How comforting or reassuring such advice would have been in practical terms is hard to estimate, even though some miracles supposedly occurred after long periods of waiting—two years (no. 48) or even eight (no. 69). Sophronius explains these long delays between arrival at Menouthis and cure by saying that a miracle will be more spectacular, and attract more people to the shrine, the longer it has taken to effect (no. 41).

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[40] See Festugière, *Sainte Thècle, Saints Côme et Damien, Saints Cyr et Jean*, 222–3 for the various staff of the shrine, not often mentioned by Sophronius.

When pilgrims had been miraculously cured, they might want to express their gratitude to SS Cyrus and John by making donations to their shrine. This could take the form of money or offerings in kind. So in no. 49, two women who have received favours from the saints send a sum of money (two *tremeis*) and a pig to Menouthis via two men from near Saïs, who abscond with the offerings and are stricken with disease in retribution. They are healed when they make reparation to the saints. Athanasia (no. 29) started out as a sceptic but was converted to believing in the power of SS Cyrus and John. In gratitude, she tended the shrine with many thank-offerings of an unspecified kind (πλουσίαις προσφοραῖς ἐθεράπευε), as did Stephanis, cured of cancer in miracle no. 19. The church itself would surely have been adorned with votive objects donated by pilgrims, as well as with visual or written depictions of miracles: indeed, Sophronius' miracle cycle is itself a literary *ex voto* on a grand scale. Sophronius has a certain amount to say about these material offerings, which gave a glimpse of the physical appearance of the vanished sanctuary. The most magnificent-sounding donation came from one of the highest-ranking pilgrims, Nemesion, a former prefect (no. 28). He beautified a part of the wall near the tomb of the saints with marble images of Christ, SS John the Baptist and Cyrus, and Nemesion himself announcing the favour that had been granted to him. The "marbles" (μαρμάροις) Sophronius mentions here probably refer to a mosaic. This is an exceptionally splendid offering: others are much humbler, in relation to the means and status of the donor. John, blind and poor, had come all the way from Rome to Menouthis in the hopes of a miracle, and was eventually rewarded after an eight-year wait (no. 69). Leaping up from his bed in the middle of the night, he recorded his cure on a wall in front of the church door: "I, John, from the city of Rome, a blind man, waited eight years here faithfully and recovered my sight through the power of SS Cyrus and John." The inscription, painted as Sophronius tells us in fiery red paint, recalls the Christian graffiti found all over the walls of religious sites in Egypt, such as at Abydos and Deir el-Bahri, in just the same red paint. Some of the other *ex votos* now seem quite bizarre, such as that of Aphnaitis also called Anastous, an Egyptian woman who suffered from severe intestinal blockage (no. 48). Eventually she was cured at Menouthis, and the reason for her affliction became clear: she had been carrying around inside her a stone the size of a large egg, which amazed everybody who saw it after she evacuated it. This object, Sophronius says, "'was suspended before the vault of the saints, so that it was visible as reminder of this miracle for many years, and those who saw it were reminded.' Peculiar as Anastous' *ex voto* may seem, her offering and those of other grateful pilgrims presumably suggested to Sophronius a plausible level of emotional, financial and even bodily investment by the cured at the site of their healing, manifesting their gratitude in very tangible and visible ways.

As some of the miracles already discussed here show, a feature of Sophronius' narrative structure is the way that he separates the pilgrims healed at Menouthis into different regional or national groups. The first 35 miracle cures are those received by Alexandrians, followed by fifteen received by Egyptians and "Libyans", and finally twenty bestowed upon foreigners, the last being Sophronius' own cure. Part of this is rhetoric, of course: by emphasising the diversity of pilgrims to Menouthis, he also emphasises the fame and puissance of the (Chalcedonian) place and its eponymous saints. But I also wonder whether this division has something to say about the pilgrim experience at Menouthis. In this context, Sophronius makes an interesting remark about his method of collecting information on the miracles. In chapter 31 of the encomium preceding the miracle cycle (= *PG* 87,3: 3417ff.) Sophronius stresses the reliability and newness of his information:

> We are not giving an account of ancient miracles or an account of things done a long time before ... rather, we write about what has

> been done in our own time, some of which we ourselves witnessed, others that we heard from those who saw the events themselves.[41]

The fact that Sophronius was able (or claimed to be able) to gather such precise details about the origins of the pilgrims suggests that while at the shrine, people were defined by place of origin, and that local allegiances still remained strong when the visitor was part of the larger, supra-national pilgrim body ostensibly united by their devotion to the saints and their hopes for a cure. I will consider the implications of this shortly, but beforehand it is necessary to look at the pilgrim constituency of Menouthis in a little more detail.

Of the twenty foreign pilgrims healed at Menouthis, only one is from the west, John the Roman (no. 69). The rest come from the cities of Asia Minor (Tarsus in Cilicia (no. 51), Aphrodisias in Caria (no. 59), and Pataron in Lycia (no. 66)); from Syria and Palestine (Damascus, including Sophronius himself (nos. 54 and 70), Eleutheropolis (no. 53) and Tyre (no. 64)); or from Greek islands such as Cyprus (no. 67) and Rhodes (no. 57). However, some of these foreigners had been living in Egypt for some time, such as Rhodope, originally from Theopolis (formerly Antioch) but long resident in Alexandria (no. 62). Sophronius' introduction to the cures of the foreign pilgrims, at the beginning of miracle 51, is interesting (*PG* 87,3: 3612). He apologises for placing the foreigners last in the cycle, and assures them that they have no reason to feel insulted because of this. He stresses the difficulties they must have had getting to the shrine and praises the devotion to the saints that this implies. This *apologia* is prefaced with the passage quoted in the epigraph to this article, very reminiscent of *Acts* 2:9–12, especially the mention of "all the peoples under heaven". Sophronius perhaps implies by this that the cult of SS Cyrus and John has a universal appeal to all, including non-Christians, though the implication is that they will be converted to Chalcedonianism.[42]

In spite of the international dimension to the cult Sophronius is so keen to stress, it is still notable that more than 50 out of his 70 healed pilgrims were born or lived in Egypt, and those from outside Alexandria mostly lived at places within fairly easy reach of the shrine.[43] Some came from Nikiou, west of Alexandria (nos. 38 and 50), or the *ktema* of Heraclius fourteen stades away from Menouthis (nos. 39, 43, 44), while others were from towns in other parts of the Delta such as Pelusium and Saïs (nos. 47, 49). One child was from Babylon (Old Cairo) (no. 41), and there were even three pilgrims from Mareotis, perhaps hinting at rivalry between Egypt's two major healing shrines (nos. 40, 45, 46). Only Antonius from Thebes (no. 48) and John, the Monophysite sub-deacon from Cynopolis, had travelled from more distant parts of Egypt where Chalcedonian elites might be thought to hold little sway. In this context, the case of John of Cynopolis is particularly interesting. He came to the shrine to be cured of the eye complaint *leukoma*. While at the shrine, John was healed and subsequently converted to Chalcedon, but he admitted that when he returned home he would be expected to succeed his father as deacon, and that these expectations would be difficult to resist.[44]

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[41] Clearly reminiscent of Luke 1:1–4. See also the Greek version of the miracles attributed to St. Demetrius at Thessalonika (P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens receuils des miracles de saint Démétrius I* [Paris 1979], 53), where exactly the same protestation of veracity is made.

[42] See e.g. the miraculous cures of the unnamed Jewish woman (no. 30) and Julian the heretical Gaianite (no. 12). See also Delehaye 1927:52, where a Jewish

Apart from religious differences, Sophronius is also at pains to emphasise the variable backgrounds of the pilgrims. The cures of people of very different social status are sometimes paired to give the miracle narrative a pleasing symmetry and, I would argue, to underscore the theme of universality. Miracle no. 24, the healing of two Alexandrian women called Juliana, has already been mentioned; miracles nos. 17 and 18 are similarly balanced through the notion that worldly status is as nothing in the eyes of the saints. In nos. 17 and 18 the pilgrims are John, known as Chrysones because of his wealth, and Paulus, who is poverty-stricken (ἀχρύσος): again, both men are cured of different complaints. There are many prominent pilgrims represented in the miracle cycle, particularly among the Alexandrians. Several are characterised on the basis of wealth, such as John known

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refugee from Gaza immediately wishes to convert to Christianity on visiting the shrine.

[43] This is a feature of other miracle cycles: see e.g. the Coptic version of the miracles attributed to St Menas (Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 108–25), where most of the cured are Alexandrians or foreigners living in the city, or the Miracles of St Artemius, almost contemporaneous to Sophronius, where all the pilgrims live near the shrine in Constantinople (see Crisafulli and Nesbitt, *The Miracles of St Artemios, passim*).

[44] H. Chadwick, "John Moschus and his friend Sophronius the Sophist", *JTS* 25 (1974):54–5.

as Chrysones already mentioned, or Peter from Charagmata in Palestine (no. 58), whom Sophronius calls "a man of distinction and wealth" (ἀνὴρ γέγονε τίμιος, γένει δὲ καὶ πλούτῳ γυαρούμενος), as well as those generically referred to as "the throngs of rich people who slept at the shrine of the martyrs where all sorts of diseases were cured" (no. 9). Other people are described in terms of professions, and there are several important officials: Christodorus the *oikonomos* and his wife and daughter (nos. 8–10); Julianus the *comes* (no. 12); Ammonius the *octavarius* (no. 1). The rarity of Egyptian names among the pilgrims is noticeable. Only three have unequivocally Egyptian names, Sarapammon (no. 22), Piamoth who came from near Saïs in the Delta (no. 49), and a woman called Aphnaitis (no. 48). Perhaps a greater proportion of Egyptian-named pilgrims might be expected had there been more visitors recorded from further south in Egypt. The apparent preponderance of Alexandrian pilgrims, an appreciable number of whom were rich or otherwise socially prominent, may suggest that an important constituency of the shrine was among the Chalcedonian élite of Alexandria, whether or not native-born.

All this information may be seen as a standard component of miracle cycles, included to historicise the narrative, thereby adding to its persuasiveness and verisimilitude, to emphasise the importance of the shrine, and also to impart variety and local colour. But Sophronius's presentation of those cured at Menouthis in terms of their diverse social, national and religious backgrounds rather than as pilgrims pure and simple may also give some hints about the experience of pilgrimage at the site. Following the lead of Durkheim, some sociologists and anthropologists of pilgrimage have argued that the individuality of pilgrims becomes subsumed in the pilgrimage experience, which is a social unifier and moral regenerator. In contrast, the anthropologist Victor Turner opined that pilgrimage is in fact an anti-structural act, and developed the concept of pilgrim *communitas*, "a relational quality of full unmediated communication, even communion, between definite and determinate identities"[45] who are temporarily freed by pilgrimage from the hierarchical social structures that normally order and determine their lives. Turner's notion of *communitas* has been extensively critiqued. Anthropological fieldwork testing his theories suggests that far from dissolving social boundaries and distinctions, pilgrimage in fact reinforces them. Also, there has been a shift away from regarding pilgrimage in binary terms as an act which is either supportive or subversive of a given status quo.[46] Pilgrimage is now often seen as a more dialectic process than either Durkheim's or Turner's models allow for, as a locus for contested meanings or competing discourses. I quote from Michael Sallnow, whose analysis of contemporary regional cults at Cusco in the Andes has some interesting resonances for Late Antique Menouthis:

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[45] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, 250 and *passim*.

> Exclusiveness may be fully accented in the midst of inclusiveness. The same set of cultic relations may be the vehicles for both affirming and denying hierarchy and privilege. Cults that overarch and transcend boundaries simultaneously offer arenas for expressing or exaggerating them, or even for establishing new ones. Regional cults, in other words, provide at once for both universalism and particularism, for both the recession and resurgence of social and cultural differentiation.[47]

It is legitimate to look at Sophronius' taxonomy of the Menouthis pilgrims against such an anthropological and theoretical background. The cult at Menouthis did, perhaps, "overarch and transcend boundaries", especially sectarian boundaries, possibly even going as deep as the divide between Christians and non-Christians: orthodox believers, heretics, pagans and Jews all sought healing at the shrine. And it surely also provided for the "recession and resurgence of social and cultural differentiation". Different pilgrim groups experience the same sacred space differently: responses are mediated by many different factors beyond the actuality of being a pilgrim. Turner's *communitas*, with its concomitant dissolution of normal boundaries, may have been experienced, but at the same time local allegiances may have been strengthened too, particularly if visitors to the shrine waited considerable amounts of time for a cure. As pilgrims came and went, long-term visitors would have defined themselves in terms of their origins rather than the fact of them being pilgrims. Here the logistics of organising the pilgrims to Menouthis, of which we are now mostly ignorant, may also have had some effect—if, for instance, people from particular localities were accommodated in separate parts of the complex. Yet in spite of the shared hopes of the pilgrims, Sophronius' account acknowledges plurality of experience on the level of the individual afflicted body. As sick individuals travelled to the healing shrine, their journey brought them from the margins of secular society to the centre of a temporary community travelling towards the sacred. On arrival, the sick pilgrims found themselves the focus of attention in the public places and religious rituals, where human physical imperfection was, for once, placed in an exalted position as the vessel for the spiritual power which brings the heavenly down to earth.

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[46] See J. Eade and M.J. Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred: the Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London 1991), 4–5, with bibliography.

[47] M.J. Sallnow, *Pilgrims of the Andes: Regional Cults in Cusco* (Washington, DC 1987), 9–10.

IV. *Conclusions*

m‘3 n nṯr, Menouthis, Ἄββα κύρος, Abuqir: names create landscapes. The process of naming a particular place captures it in social discourses, so that the name bestowed acts as a sort of mnemonic, both for the character of the environment itself and for the historical actions of individuals and groups within that environment. The naming of the successive shrines at Menouthis illustrates such a history, from an undifferentiated "divine place", the *m‘3 n nṯr*, to a characteristically Christian one whose sanctity is channelled by the body of a martyr, where spatial sacredness gives way to the bodily holiness of focal personality or personalities, especially the body of saints or martyrs which exude sacred power. "If a sacred centre offers the opportunity for direct contact with the divine, then relocating that centre in a human body makes the divine even more accessible and responsive to human needs and aspirations."[48] If anything, the history of pilgrimage at Menouthis illustrates the tenacity of orthopraxy over orthodoxy. Religious or doctrinal differences can be transcended by the continuity of recognisable ritual performances—at Menouthis, incubation in a sanctuary to obtain miraculous cures. All this is tied up with the intrinsic sacredness of the spot, which could itself mean very different things to different visitors. Any pilgrimage shrine, while emenating an intrinsic religious significance all its own, provides simultaneously a ritual space for the expression of a diversity of individual perceptions and meanings which the pilgrims themselves bring to the shrine and inscribe upon it.[49] If we accept such an interpretation of Menouthis, then there is no problem about the coexistence of the pagan and Christian there: however mediated, it was the inherent sacredness of the *place* as a focus for personal devotion that was foremost.

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[48] Eade and Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred*, 7.

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[49] Eade and Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred*, 10.

THE PILGRIMAGE CENTER OF ABÛ MÎNÂ*

PETER GROSSMANN

Abû Mînâ is a place in Maryût, ca. 45 km south-west of Alexandria, where since the late fourth century the tomb of St. Menas has been venerated.[1] According to tradition, the place of the tomb was unknown for a long time.[2] Some miraculous healings, however, helped its rediscovery.[3] The site henceforth developed into a large pilgrimage center. Most famous are the churches erected upon the tomb of the saint and the so-called Menas-bottles produced in Abû Mînâ itself according to the model of traditional pilgrim flasks[4] and decorated with a picture of the saint in an adorating gesture flanked on both sides with two camels. The ancient name of the town is not known.[5] In all surviving sources the place is named only as "the church of St. Menas in Maryût."

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[1] On the vita and miracles of St. Menas see J. Drescher, *Apa Mena. A selection of Coptic texts relating to St. Menas* (Cairo 1946) *passim*; a similar collection of Arabic texts is prepared by F. Jaritz, *Die arabischen Quellen zum Heiligen Menas* (Heidelberg 1993).

[2] According to the legend, as recorded in the *encomium* on St. Menas, attributed to John, Patriarch of Alexandria (either John III, 681–689, or John IV, 775–789), Menas was the son of an officer in the Roman army stationed in Phrygia. He was a Christian and of Egyptian origin. After the death of his father Menas entered the army as well, but when during the reign of Diocletianus (284–305) imperial sacrifices were demanded (edict from AD 303) he deserted the service and returned only five years later confessing in the same time his Christian belief. He refused to take part in the required imperial sacrifices and was accordingly beheaded. Although his body was supposed to be cremated, it was rescued by his former comrades of the army, who were then transferred to Egypt to oppose barbarian attacks in Maryût. There the troops were forced to abandon the sarcophagus with the relics of the saint on their return to Phrygia, when the camels bearing the coffin refused to carry it further. Therefore they buried him at the spot near a village called "Este". Many years later the villagers became aware of the healing power of the tomb of St. Menas and built over it a tiny oratory in the form of a tetrapylon with a small dome, cf. Drescher, *Coptic texts* 35–72 (Coptic) 126–149 (Introduction and Engl. transl.).

[3] There are several different versions recording the burial of the saint and its final discovery. The most convincing tradition which accords also with the archaeological observations is recorded in the anonymous martyrdom of St. Menas, survived in Greek (B.H.G., 1254) and Coptic (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Cod. M. 590 fol. 1r–18v); the latter edited and translated by Drescher, *Coptic Texts* 1–6 (text), 100–104 (transl.) and tells that after the martyrium of the saint, his relics were collected by his sister who also brought them to Alexandria. The rest then goes on in a rather miraculous manner. However, since his sister brought his body to Egypt she would also have organized his funeral in a probably family-owned tomb at their native place. Since she surely would have been aware of the location of this family tomb, it is also not unbelievable that the tomb where his relics were finally discovered is identical with this very tomb of his family.

I. *The earliest remains*

The oldest remains which have been discovered are datable to the late fourth century CE and belong to the tomb of the saint. The tomb proper of St. Menas was located in an earlier *hypogaeum* (underground burial place). Small statuettes of monkeys and miniature stelae of the god Horus-Harpocrates, discovered by the first excavator in the earlier burial sections of the *hypogaeum*,[6] suggest that this area goes back to the pagan period and demonstrates that the region was inhabited already in pre-Christian times.[7] Originally this *hypogaeum* was accessible in typical fashion by a vertical shaft which opens at the bottom, at a depth of about 5.3 m, to a group of three galleries distributed in a star-shaped manner, each of which gave access to seven symmetrically arranged burial caves.[8] The relics of the saint were placed above the position of an unfinished extension of the *hypogaeum* and the same place was later transformed into a semi-domed niche (*arcosolium*), similar to those which are known from Roman catacombs. Above this, at ground level only a simple cenotaph was first erected.[9] It was soon surrounded by a small mausoleum built of sundried bricks.[10]

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[4] Kaufmann, *Ikonographie* 57–120.

[5] The name "Zenopolis" as it was deduced by Kaufmann, *Ikonographie* 44, from an Ethiopian text, is not historical.

[6] Kaufmann, *Die Menasstadt* 71ff. Figs. 24–29; *ibidem, Ikonographie* 110ff. fig. 55f.

[7] This does, not however mean that these finds date back to the pre-Constantinian period. Until the edict of Theodosius I. from 392 CE, which forbids pagan sacrifices in the Empire, paganism has to be expected everywhere in the country.

[8] Recently another *hypogaeum* of apparently the same kind was discovered about 60 m to the north-west of the Menas tomb, below the actual *Great Xenodochium*, having unfortunately its burial chambers so deep in the ground that they come to be located below the actual ground water table.

[9] A full description of the *hypogaeum* including all the later erected churches above the tomb is given in: Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, *passim*.

[10] In the texts it is described as a *tetrapylon* which, however, not corresponds with the archaeological finds.

II. *The first church upon the tomb of the Saint and the Great Basilica*

The first small church, whose sanctuary occupies the area of that mausoleum, dates back to the first half of the fifth century. It had the shape of a three-aisled basilica and its sanctuary consisted of a central apse flanked on both sides with rectangular side chambers (*pastophoria*). In the following years this church was enlarged several times with various additions and alterations on all sides. One of the earliest additions was a staircase to accommodate access to the tomb, established to the east of the church. Soon after, it was provided to the west with a small baptistry which reflects the desire of many neophytes to be baptized at the church of St. Menas. At the end of the 5th century the Great Basilica was added in the east.[11] It had the shape of a transept basilica, and the width of its nave—more than 14 meters, made it the largest church in Egypt for the period.

In the actual ruins of this church two building periods have to be distinguished. The earlier one had a three-aisled nave and a single-aisled transept. At both ends of the transept two rectangular chambers were placed, both serving probably as *pastophoria* (liturgical side chambers). During the second period the transept was enlarged to a three-aisled transverse hall with the *pastophoria* placed now to the sides of the apse. In front of the apse as usual the altar was standing surrounded by a *ciborium* on four columns and the *cancelli* (screens) of the presbytery. It is interesting to note that behind the altar a slightly curved tribune was erected standing on columns and accessible apparently from the inner area of the presbytery. Probably this structure has to be understood as an unusually shaped *synthronon* (seats for the clerics and the bishop). It is, however, of later date. The two small underground chambers beyond this structure and below the triumphal arch of the apse are ordinary burial chambers, assigned probably to meritorious clerics who did the services in this church.

A few decades later the old baptistry at the western end of the first church was replaced by a larger one. It was composed of several rooms for the necessary preparations of baptism, such as undressing and anointing of the neophytes. Consignation after the immersion in the *piscina* (font) was probably performed in the neighbouring room to the south, which is connected to a larger hall where neophytes could assemble at the end of the baptismal rites and proceed together into the church to take part in the liturgy with the rest of the congregation. The centrally placed main chamber of the new baptistry was a domed octagon with niches in the diagonal corners, each flanked by a pair of columns.[12] The center of the octagon is provided with a very large *piscina* sunk into the floor with steps at the eastern and western sides. Its size is suitable to perform large numbers of baptisms. Apparently two or even three neophytes could enter the font together at the same time. Some years later the building was provided even with a second baptismal font in the chamber to the west of the octagon, which was used in other seasons of the year when only a smaller number of neophytes were to be baptized. The excavators were lucky to discover the complete equipment of this baptistery: its water supply from a neighbouring tank in the northwest (at its latest stage even from the roof of the building) and the place where the used water would finally seep into the ground.

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[11] P. Grossmann, in: "11. vorl. Bericht," 131ff. fig. 1; *ibidem*, "Neue Funde aus Abû Mînâ," in: *Akten 12. Kongr.* II, 825–828, fig. 2.

III. *The Martyr Church ("Gruftkirche") of the Justinianic period*

A. *The main body of the church*

Finally, in the time of Justinian (527–565), the first church, which had been frequently enlarged, was replaced by a new "Martyr Church," which received the shape of a double shell tetraconch. This is a building type that one finds relatively often in Syria,[13] but which has no tradition in Egypt. The example in Abû Mînâ differs from the usual design in having a slightly elongated ground plan while the concept of the tetraconch is realized only in the inner colonnades, composed of large, reused marble columns. The outer walls are straight, interrupted only at the apexes of the lateral conches with small outwardly projecting niches. These niches are flanked with columns and screened in front. Probably reliquaries were placed inside the screened area for the production of martyr oil, which was needed in large quantities for the different ointments in the baptismal rites. Such reliquaries, of which many examples are known from Syrian churches,[14] are usually constructed with a small opening on top and an outlet at the bottom of one side. When oil was poured into the reliquary through the upper opening, it would come into connection with the relics, and the healing power of the relics (as it was understood at that time) would be transmitted to the oil.[15]

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[12] W. Müller-Wiener in: "3. vorl. Bericht," 133–137.

[13] P. Grossmann, "Die zweischaligen spätantiken Vierkonchenbauten in Ägypten und ihre Beziehung zu den gleichartigen Bauten in Europa und Kleinasien," in: *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten*, Aegytiaca Treverensia 2 (Mainz 1983), 167–173.

Concerning the roofing of the church, only the eastern conche (which functioned at the same time as the apse of the church) was headed with a semi-dome. It rested upon a closer sequence of columns which stood on stronger foundations. For the other conches that had much lighter foundations semi-pyramidal roofs had to be constructed of wooden beams.[16]

The altar was placed, according to tradition, in front of the eastern conche, encircled as usual by *cancelli* (screens) of marble slabs held by small posts (*stipites*). Remains of those marble posts are still visible in front of the apse. Below the place of the altar, recognizable in a slightly elevated podium, a vessel of alabaster was placed into the ground with a narrow upper opening at floor level for libation. Apparently, oil was poured through that opening into the vessel. There it became consecrated through the vessel's proximity to the earth around the tomb, which was understood as sacred.[17] Later the oil was taken out and distributed among the faithful, who regarded it as consecrated Martyr-oil. People filled small vessels with it and carried it home for use as medical treatment. It is very likely that this practice led to the invention of the famous Menas bottles.[18] According to a chemical analysis of remains in this underground vessel this oil contained a high percentage of suspended incense.[19]

B. *Narthex*

In the remaining rather narrow area between this "Martyr Church" and the Great Basilica a kind of narthex was built with two smaller lateral conches at the narrower northern and southern ends. It had a straight row of columns on its western side into which the two easternmost columns at the apex of the eastern conch of the Martyr-Church were integrated. The narthex opens to the east with a large entrance (*tribelon*) into the Great Basilica divided by two inserted columns into three openings. On the northern side of the narthex the stairs for the descent to the crypt were placed.

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[14] W. Gessel, "Das Öl der Märtyrer. Zur Funktion und Interpretation der Ölsarkophage von Apamea in Syrien," *OrChrist* 72 (1988):183–202.

[15] Lucius, *Heiligenkult*, 194f., 299.

[16] Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 142ff.

[17] Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 298, 301ff.; even nowadays faithful people collect the earth from the area around the churches in paper and plastic-bags and carry it home as a valuable substance.

[18] J. Engemann, "Eulogien und Votive," in: *Akten 12. Kongr.* I, 223–233.

[19] Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 65ff.

C. *The crypt*

With every reshaping of the Martyr-Church the crypt with the saint's tomb received a new design. At its final stage, also completed under Justinian, the crypt was provided with two large stairways, one for descending and the other for ascending.[20] Apparently the eastern stairway served for descending, the northern one for ascending. The existence of two stairs points to the large number of pilgrims wishing to venerate the relics of St. Menas in that time. The crypt proper was now composed of two underground chambers: a square antechamber covered with a cross vault resting on four corner columns and to the west a small domed *confessio*. At the southern side of the latter the already mentioned semidomed niche (*arcosolium*) was situated, and it was here that the sarcophagus with the relics of the saint was placed. In this *confessio* the faithful could perform their devotions, say prayers, convey secretly their wishes, and then depart by the second stairs to the north. A so-called *cataract*, a kind of vertical tube often installed in western churches to establish a direct connection from the relics in the crypt to the sanctuary of the upper church,[21] was not present. Access to the remaining galleries of the earlier *hypogaeum* was walled up.

IV. *The Pilgrimage Center*

At the same time that the churches were built, the region around them was turned into a large pilgrimage center.[22] It consisted of a central ecclesiastical area surrounded by a settlement of ordinary dwellings. The ecclesiastical center was to a large extent arranged according to the principles of classical town planning, with regularly distributed colonnaded streets, squares, street arches, and a number of different public buildings. Of particular importance is the lay-out of the colonnaded north-south street, the main approach (*embolos*) to the center of the town that was used by all the pilgrims visiting the tomb of St. Menas. In an apparently deliberate architectural plan—to raise the tension of the pilgrims arriving for the first time—this street becomes continuously narrower the closer it comes to the center, such that even the lateral colonnaded porticoes are abandoned at the end. The center itself is represented by a large rectangular square ("Pilgrims' court") into which the street runs with a final tripartite archway. This Pilgrims' court is itself surrounded on all four sides with colonnaded porticoes and shops behind them. The churches and the baptistry lie to the south of the court, while on its northern side the main row of *xenodochia* (rest houses) is situated. The center of the court is adorned with a small well-house, sitting on four columns. Other pilgrim hostels of a more modest standard are placed further to the north. In their architectural shapes these *xenodochia* are composed with large inner peristyles, following the designs of earlier guest-houses as they are known from classical sites.[23] An unusual building of this kind in Abû Mînâ is the so-called "peristyle-house," a huge single-storied complex composed of two peristyles with extraordinarily wide surrounding porticoes and only a very small number of additional rooms. Apparently the guests who rested in this house were not accommodated in different rooms, but remained in the porticoes where they were at least protected against sun and rain. The building might thus be understood as a *xenodochium* for *humiliores* (resthouse for the poor). Probably one of the two peristyles was destinated for men, the other for women and children.[24]

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[20] Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 189ff.

[21] J. Braun, *Der christliche Altar in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* I (München 1924), 562f.

[22] P. Grossmann, "Neue Funde aus Abû Mînâ," in: *Akten 12. Kongr.* II, 825–832, fig. 1.

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[23] E.g. the *Katagogeion* in the sanctuary of Asklepios in Epidauros, of which a plan is to be found in all tourist guides; and the Leonidaion of Olympia, cf. A. Mallwitz, *Olympia und seine Bauten* (Darmstadt 1972), 246ff. fig. 201; recently, however, the Leonidaion has been interpreted not as a resthouse, but as an *estiatorion* to feed a larger number of guests, cf. W. Hoepfner, "Zum Typus der Basileia und der königlichen Andrones," in: *Basileia. Die Paläste der hellenistischen Könige. Internationales Symposium in Berlin 16.–20. 12. 1992* (Mainz 1996), 1–43, esp. 36ff. figs. 32, 35.

[24] P. Grossmann in: "13. vorl. Bericht," 398ff.

A. *The southern hemicyclium*

To the south of the churches, and thus far from the main traffic zone, a semi-circular building of two stories is situated.[25] It served with all probability the accommodation of sick people who wanted to stay for a longer period beside the tomb of the saint. This function would explain the semi-circular ground plan of the building, because all the rooms are of roughly equal proximity to the tomb of the saint. The building has two different kinds of toilets situated side by side, obviously assigned separately by gender. The other rooms differ in their sizes. Smaller and larger rooms apparently accommodated single persons and larger groups and might thus have been used for incubation purposes, a frequently chosen way of being healed from severe diseases in which doctors at that time were not able to help.[26] Many cases of successful healings are recorded by Sophronios, the early 7th century Patriarch of Jerusalem, for the pilgrimage center of Abû Kir ("Cyrus and John") at ancient Menouthis situated to the east of Alexandria,[27] where he stayed for several months to be healed from a severe sickness of his eyes. Unfortunately this pilgrimage center does not survive.

Incubation, which was practiced already in pagan times throughout the Empire,[28] was a miraculous way of healing carried out through the direct interference of the saint in cases where human medicine could not help anymore. It is based upon the ancient belief that the ascended martyr was present near his earthly body while at the same time accessible at other places or able to move very fast from one place to the other.[29] Incubation rites involved resting, preferably at night, next to the tomb of the saint,[30] or in a neighbouring room if there are multiple incubants, with the expectation that the Saint would visit during sleep and either immediately heal the incubant or give advice for a successful treatment.[31] Besides healing serious health-problems the saint could also fulfill the desire for children,[32] help in an easy delivery for women, finding lost or stolen objects, finding out the truth if someone is lying (miracles no. 14 and 15),[33] or solving crimes (miracles no. 5.18.22).[34] Of course, incubation did not always bring the desired results immediately. Often the incubants had to repeat the procedure several times. Others needed to wait for many years. In difficult cases the assisting priests could unofficially arrange a closer vantage to the body of the saint, permitting the pilgrim to stay overnight in the crypt itself in order to intensify the reception of the saint's power. Nevertheless, ultimate success was expected with confidence, and hagiographical literature and historical sources are full of testimonies to successful healings.[35] Healings from incubation and from visions in the chapels of martyrs were still occurring at other places in Egypt through the medieval period.[36] Those who were successfully healed often extended their stay at the pilgrimage center, as Sophronios did at Menuthis,[37] to assist in the

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[25] W. Hölzle in: "13. vorl. Bericht," 401–406 fig. 11.

[26] A basic discussion of the procedure is given by Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 252ff.

[27] Sophronius, *Laudes in ss. Cyrum et Joannes* 20 (= *PG* 87, 3:3481A); a new edition was prepared by N. Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata de Sofronio. Contribucion al estudio de la Incubatio cristiana* (Madrid 1975); on the site itself see L. Duchesne, "Le sanctuaire d'Aboukir," *BSAA* 12, 1910, 3–14; generally on incubation rites in Christian churches see Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 299ff.; Kötting, *Peregrinatio* 392ff.

[28] Especially in the sanctuaries of the god Asclepius, examples collected by Thraemer, *RE* II (1896) 1690, see also ibid. 1686ff.; detailed descriptions on the procedure gives Aelius Aristides, *hieroi logoi* II 5ff.; but they occur also in the temples of Sarapis and Isis, cf. recently R. Merkelbach, *Isis regina—Zeus Sarapis* (Stuttgart/ Leipzig 1995) 199ff.; as historical sources cf. Strabo, *de geogr.* XVII 1,17; Diodor Sicul. I,25,2–5; Tibull I,3,27.

[29] Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 124ff.

[30] In a small church, at Sidi Maḥmûd (not far to the north-west of Abû Mînâ)

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where a tomb of a saint was extant at the western end of the church provision was made to allow incubants to rest and sleep directly upon the burial place of the saint, see P. Grossmann – F. Khorshid, "Excavation in the church of Sidi Maḥmûd in 1993," in: *Papers of a Symposium on Coptic Excavations hold at the Soc. of Coptic Arch. in Cairo, 7th–9th Nov. 1996* (in press).

[31] An account how such a healing process during an incubation sleep in a church takes place is fully described by Agathon (665–681) in his record of the consecration of the church of Benjamin I in the monastery of Abû Maqâr in Wâdî Natrûn, cf. R.-G. Coquin, *Livre de la consécration du sanctuaire de Benjamin*, Bibliothèque d'études coptes 13 (Cairo 1975), 177–185. Miraculous healings which occured in Abû Mînâ are recorded in several miraculous stories of the saint, cf. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 161ff. (as no. 1. 3.) 300ff.

[32] Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 168f. no. 9.

[33] Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 173ff.

[34] See Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 165ff.

[35] Sozomenos, *Hist.eccl.* 2.3.10ff., with the description of several successful treatments in the church of the archangel Michael near Constantinople; Gregory of Tours, *de glor.martyr.* 98 concerning the sanctuary of Cosmas and Damian at Aegae in Cilicia; also well known is the miraculous healing of the Emperor Justinian from a serious illness by the same saints in a sanctuary near Constantinople, which later was richly embellished by the Emperor; cf. Procopius, *de aed.* 1.6.5–7.

[36] Cf. Abû l-Makarîm (ed. and tr. B.T.A. Evetts, *The churches and monasteries of Egypt and some neighbouring countries attributed to Abû Sâlih, the Armenian*, Anecdota Oxoniensia [Oxford 1895, repr. 1969], fol. 111a (p. 301): "... many men lodged in the church and spent day and night there; and the king provided for those that lodged there and built chambers for them to dwell in."

[37] Kötting, *Peregrinatio* 203ff.

care for other pilgrims[38] or to demonstrate their gratitude in other ways. Sophronios, for example, wrote a book on all the miracles performed by the saints Cyrus and John from Menouthis;[39] Paulinus of Nola composed a new poem in praise of his saint Felix of Nola every year, to be proclaimed at the day of his feast.[40] A document from Upper Egypt of 770/80 CE deals with a certain John from Hermonthis who gave his child as a present to the monastery of Apa Phoibammon as gratitude for the successful healing from the child's mortal sickness.[41] Others offered valuables of various kinds (or simply money), or they endowed icons, precious vessels,[42] crosses, lamps, knitted curtains, wall paintings, mosaics, and marble-encrustation for the embellishment of the church. Still others contributed to the oil for lamps, brought flowers or wreaths for the decoration of the tomb and altar, or supplied meat and drink for the celebration of memorial meals beside the tomb of the Saint or for feeding the poor during the days of the feast.[43] There are several miracles of St. Menas telling about the devotion of animals, especially pigs, which would have been slaughtered at the Site to feed the poor.[44] One would thus expect a pen or a farm to have stood in the vicinity to keep these animals, similar to the poultry farm recorded from the sanctuary of St. Thecla in Seleucia.[45]

B. *The palace*

To the east of the southern hemicyclium at Abû Mînâ, in the corner bordered by the nave and the transept of the Great Basilica, a palace-like structure is situated with a small atrium-like court to the north and a typical reception hall to the south flanked on both sides with symmetrically arranged side chambers. The building probably served for representative purposes of the *hegoumenos* of the pilgrimage center and was accessible only through the church. The court is provided at its eastern side with a broad but rather flat niche in the wall and a screened area in front. Probably on certain occasions this arrangement could be used for some liturgical celebrations for a select group of people. To the west there is a large *triclinium* (dining room) with a southern apse. However, private rooms where the *hegoumenos* really lived are missing in this complex and they have to be located elsewhere, or were situated in the upper floor, which was reached by a stairway, added somewhat later, located in the rear part of the building.

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[38] Also miracle no. 15, cf. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 173ff.

[39] See N. Fernandez Marcos, *Los Thaumata de Sofronio. Contribucion al estudio de la Incubatio cristiana* (Madrid 1975), with a new edition of the Greek text.

[40] Lucius, *Heiligenkult*, 297.

[41] KRU 93, cf. W.C. Till, *Die koptischen Rechtsurkunden aus Theben* (Wien 1964), 173ff. (Germ. transl.).

[42] The miracle no. 7, cf. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 167f., deals with the devotion of a silver plate; of the Coptic miracle collected by Drescher this has the no. 3, see *ibidem, Coptic texts* 114ff.; another miracle no. 13, cf. Jaritz, ibid., 173, deals with the endowment of "coloured wood for the work in the sanctuary."

[43] For examples with rich bibliography see Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 288ff.

[44] Miracle no. 14, 18, 20, 21, cf. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen* 173ff.

[45] Bas. Seleuc., *De miraculorum Theclae* II, 8 (*PG* 85, 577), quoted after Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 296 n. 1; a new edition of these miracles with French translation and comment was published by G. Dagron, *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle*, Subsidia hagiographica 62 (1978), not available to me.

C. *The eastern court*

To the east of the pilgrimage square a small secondary court is situated extending along the northern and eastern sides of the Great Basilica. It is accessible from the pilgrimage court through a relatively large gate. At the northern and eastern sides of this court stands a rather long and apparently multifloored building. It is built of sun-dried bricks with equally arranged two-room apartments that were probably meant for the housing of the so-called *spudaioi* or *philoponoi* who assisted in the services and organization of the pilgrimage center.[46] Among them were probably also some former pilgrims who had received successful healing by the power of the saint. Similar cases are recorded from other pilgrimage centers, like the sanctuary of Cyrus and John in Menouthis.[47] The way of grouping these rooms is very much like the monk cells in the *laura* near the East Church (east of the main center of Abû Mînâ; see below, § VI): each had a large, usually square, entrance chamber that served as a working or reception room and a smaller room for sleeping or prayer.[48]

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[46] On these see H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich. Byzantinisches Handbuch* II, 1 (München 1959); 138f.; also E. Wipszycka, "Les confréries dans la vie religieuse de l'Égypte chrétienne," *Proceedings of the XIIth International Congress of Papyrology* (Toronto 1970), 511–525; in Egypt they are known from the third century on under the name of *philoponoi.*

[47] Kötting op. cit. 205f.; another example is recorded by Lucius, *Heiligenkult* 297, of a former blind from Milan who devoted the rest of his life to the service of the saints who helped in receiving again his eyesight.

[48] P. Grossmann in: "6. vorl. Bericht," 463–465 fig. 3.

Since the region of Abû Mînâ is devoid of any natural water source at an acceptable depth in the ground, the roofs of all the buildings in the ecclesiastical precinct were used to collect rain water during the winter months for underground cisterns. All the center's buildings as well as the numerous small private houses on the periphery had their own underground cisterns for collecting rain water for use in the dry summer months.[49] The combined cistern of the *Gruftkirche* and the Great Basilica has a length of about 25 meters and a capacity of ca. 450 cubic meters.

D. *The northern region of the center*

Further to the north but still within the ecclesiastical precinct there are also two public baths, built according to the style of Roman bath-buildings, with independent sections for men and women. They probably did not serve the everyday entertainment of the population. Rather, their location within the boundaries of the ecclesiastical precinct suggests that they were used mainly at the end of the Lenten fast on Maundy Thursday for the preparation of Easter, for in antiquity abstention from washing was included with fasting. At that time all the neophytes would also bathe before being baptized in the great Baptistery of the sanctuary mentioned above. Other buildings served for church administration and as magazines and shops. To the east of the so-called Double Bath stands a huge wine factory.

The whole ecclesiastical precinct was surrounded by a narrow wall (*peribolos* wall), which was provided with gates at the different street junctions. One gate in the north-western road bend of the main street (opposite the so-called North-Bath) is somewhat remarkable for having on its outer side a number of sitting benches, apparently to be used by people awaiting the opening of the gate.

The point at which the main north-south street enters directly into the inner ecclesiastical area is marked by an arch resting on two tall columns as well as a new beginning of the colonnaded porticoes on both sides of the street.

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[49] The graffito of a pilgrim from Smyrna praising the water at Abû Mînâ as recorded by C.M. Kaufmann, "I. Bericht," 93 and "III. Bericht," 18, has misled the researches for more than two generations. The author of this graffito could have meant only the rain water. No water, holy by itself without any priestly consecration, was ever available in Abû Mînâ; to this context belongs also the story of a woman who sold falsely curative water from St. Menas, according to the Coptic Synaxarium of 11th Sept. (= *PO* 1:267: 4): the woman was discovered as being possessed by an unclean spirit, and was cured by St. Agathon the stylite.

E. *The outer living quarters of the town*

Beyond the *peribolos* wall of the ecclesiastical precinct the ordinary living quarters of the town were laid out. Here the houses, built usually of sun-dried bricks, are much more irregularly distributed. They are mainly ordinary dwellings but also include many small workshops such as wine presses and pottery kilns. One house has a mill. At several sites small, apparently private burial places in the form of underground tombs, often combined with independent memorial chapels, were discovered. So far only four such mortuary complexes are known, and the sparse excavations in this area suggest that these four could hardly represent the complete number. They were apparently the property of families whom we may presume to be Alexandrian, who liked to have their deceased buried in the sacred ground near the tomb of St. Menas.[50] Since all these examples are connected to normal dwellings within the same complexes it seems likely that these houses were frequented by the members of the family also for the celebration of memorial meals (*cenae funebres, refrigeria*) at the anniversary of the death of the deceased, as was customary at that time.[51]

The traditional cemetery of Abû Mînâ as it was discovered by C.M. Kaufmann[52] lies, however, to the south, beyond the boundaries of the town.[53] Kaufmann discovered several underground tombs. All of them were family tombs, several containing corpses of children, sometimes even in two layers. The smaller tombs consisted of small, shallow caves hollowed out of the ground and accessible by stairs of three or four steps. The larger tombs descend to a depth of about four meters below the surface and consist of large underground chambers (ca. 4 · 6 m), usually vaulted and with continuous benches running along each wall, in the center of which the bodies were. Any traces of body-wrappings or of coffins had disappeared by the time of Kaufmann's work. The area of the stairways was covered with sequences of stones to avoid the penetration of rain water.

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[50] This habit points to the fact that in its legal state the town of Saint Menas was not a true town but, rather, was understood as the burial ground of the saint. Still in the late antique period it was forbidden to have burials within the bounderies of a town (*Cod. Theod.* 9.17.6; *Cod. Just.* 3.44.12).

[51] B. Kötting, *Der frühchristliche Reliquienkult und die Bestattung im Kirchengebäude* (Köln 1965), 24ff.; P.-A. Février, "Le culte des martyrs en Afrique et ses plus anciens monuments," *CorsiRavenna* 17 (1970):191–215.

[52] Kaufmann, "II. Bericht," 102ff.

[53] Kaufmann, "II. Bericht," 97f., mentions also a northern cemetery that was concentrated in the close surroundings of the North Basilica; this cemetery is, however, highly disturbed by over-laying modern Arab tombs.

The private houses and workshops were erected at a relatively early period. When, apparently at the end of the sixth century, the above-mentioned main colonnaded street was built, it became necessary to demolish a number of these already existing houses in order to create space for the street.

F. *The fortification wall*

Close to the end of the sixth or even at the beginning of the seventh century the erection of a surrounding fortification wall for the city was started, of whose total length only a section (ca. 1.4 km) has so far been traced. However, the vestiges of this wall were observed only at the western side of the town and it seems likely that the part on the eastern side was never built. Roughly every 125 meters the wall is fitted with towers and every thirty meters—approximately the distance of an arrow-shot—there is a big outer buttress that probably was meant to support an upper platform surrounded by an outwardly projecting wooden railing. Stairs to reach the upper rampart walk were installed beside all the larger towers.[54]

There are also three gates. The northern one at the main access road to the site was a monumental state gate with three carriage-ways and a roofed portico along its inner side facing towards the town, as well as rooms for the guards on the inner western side. The structure remained unfinished, however, since the towers usually flanking a gate of this kind are still missing and no traces indicate that they ever existed. From here the colonnaded main street leading to the churches of the pilgrimage center started. At its northern end the street passed through the above-mentioned living quarter, which is of earlier date than the street itself. The north-western city gate is a normal fortification gate with only one carriage-way between two outwardly projecting towers,[55] while the south-western gate, situated in a corner of the fortification, contains only two relatively small passages between the doorposts and a presumed central pillar.

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[54] H. Jaritz in: "12. vorl. Bericht," 460ff.

V. *The North Basilica*

In the north, outside the perimeter wall of the town, the North Basilica is situated.[56] It is a medium-sized, three-aisled church of remarkably well-balanced proportion. It has a tripartite sanctuary and a western return aisle, characteristic for Egyptian church architecture although missing from the other churches at Abû Mînâ. The apse was once furnished with a *synthronon* including the throne of the bishop. In front of the apse the presbytery is situated, surrounded with the remains of the *cancelli* and traces of the altar area in the center. To the west of the church lies an atrium-like court surrounded with several dwelling units and a latrine, and to the north lies a reception hall with an apse pointing to the west. This hall was also provided with a kitchen that could be used as a *triclinium.* Attached to the church at the southern side lies a baptistry with a circular *piscina* (font) sunk into the floor and once surrounded with a *ciborium* on six columns. The baptistery is of slightly later date than the church proper. The little chapel to the east of the baptistry is provided with three altar-niches, one of the earliest examples of this arrangement,[57] reflecting the multiple baptisms performed in the baptistry at Easter. These details, as well as the general character of the complex—its situation outside the general fortification wall—suggest that the North Basilica with its additional buildings comprised the area of the Monophysite church, which the Chalcedonian owners of the town had at that time deemed heretical and thus had forbidden residence inside the town.[58] The cells around the atrium would then have served the accommodation of the bishop and his party.

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[55] H. Jaritz in: "13. vorl. Bericht," 393–398.

[56] H. Jaritz in: "9. vorl. Bericht," 216–222.

[57] Such an augmentation of the altar places becomes necessary when more than one eucharistic liturgy has to be celebrated in the same chapel at the same day, in order to overcome the proscription of celebrating the liturgy more than once a day at the same altar; a rule dating back to the time of Gregor of Nyssa (IV cent.) and recorded in the *nomocanon* 33 (163b) of Michael of Damietta; cf. W. Riedel, *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien* (Aalen 19682), 102.

[58] Examples are known from all the capitals of the Empire. During the Arian

VI. *The East church*

A second church situated outside the town of Abû Mînâ is the East Church,[59] which lies about 1.5 km further to the east and belongs as well to the sixth century. Like the Justinianic "Martyr-church," it is built according to the model of a two-shelled tetraconch. However, in contrast to the Martyr church, its outer wall sections run exactly concentrically to the inner conches, a feature corresponding directly to the Syrian model of this building type. The East Church also has an atrium to the west and, attached to it, a sequence of rooms, including a latrine along the southern side. In the north-east corner of the church a small baptistry is situated with an additional altar in the antechamber. The church is erected upon the site of an earlier and smaller basilica built of sundried bricks with a very narrow apse.

In the surroundings of the church are numerous small monks' hermitages, and thus the church has to be recognized as the spiritual center of a monastic community living in this area.[60] The hermitages themselves all have approximately the same ground-plan: a large usually square entrance room and a much smaller room in the rear. The former room probably served for living, working, and receiving guests, while the inner room was devoted to prayer and sleep. Some of these little houses have staircases, occupying a part of the smaller room and accessible from the outside. The uniformity among the houses as well as their overall simplicity compared with what we find in normal dwellings constitute the main arguments for the identification of this settlement as a *laura* of hermits.

VII. *The later history after the Arab conquest*

In 619 CE the town was destroyed by Persian invaders under Chosroes II (610–628).[61] Throughout the center of the town where new sixth-century buildings have been excavated there is also evidence of

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controversies in Rome under the Popes Liberius (352–366) and Damasus (366–384) the losing parties could stay only in the suburb of St. Peter, which was not counted as the inner region of Rome; cf. *Lib.Pont.* nos. 37–39. Under the orthodox Emperor Theodosius I (379–395) the Arian patriarchs could meet their people only outside the walls: Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.7. In Ravenna the Arian bishops had an *episcopium* outside of the town, which they left when the Goths came to power. So also in Egypt the Monophysite patriarchs usually resided in the monastery of ENATON when a Chalcedonian patriarch ruled in Alexandria.

[59] P. Grossmann in: "8. vorl. Bericht," 35–38.

[60] P. Grossmann in: "6. vorl. Bericht," 457–480, spec. 463–465 fig. 3.

[61] On the date of the Persian invasion in Egypt see recently R. Altheim-Stiehl,

heavy fire destruction. The population apparently took refuge, however, since no corpses have so far been discovered among the ruins. The circulation of coins declined to almost nothing during the Persian occupation.[62] After the Persians' withdrawal in 629 and the ensuing return of the inhabitants, only the most serious damages were repaired. Ten years later came the Arab conquest (639/642), and this time the invaders did not withdraw. Consequently, the site fell into the hands of the Coptic Church, no doubt causing the emigration of the original Chalcedonian—mainly Greek or Graeco-Egyptian—population.

The new inhabitants of the town had a completely different understanding of town planning and architecture. New houses were built mainly of rubble masonry. Streets and squares ceased to represent architectural points. Small dwellings were erected in these areas, and the original large rooms in the *xenodochia* and other buildings were subdivided into numerous small, irregular units. The sections of the colonnaded porticoes along the main streets and to the sides of the pilgrimage court of which the ceilings were still intact were walled up and subdivided into numerous smaller units. At several unexpected locations (e.g. in the south-west corner of the Pilgrimage square, directly in front of the baptistry and in the entrance-hall of the Great *Xenodochium*) small workshops such as wine presses and pottery kilns were installed.

Of all the churches in Abû Mînâ only the "Martyr-Church" was rebuilt at that time, by the very active Alexandrian Patriarch Michael I (744–68). The rebuilt church was arranged in the shape of a five-aisled basilica.[63] The outer walls of the Justinianic tetraconch church, still mostly intact, were reused. A western return aisle, customary in the Egyptian basilicas, was then added to the church, and the church's nave was extended to the former apex of the eastern conch. Meanwhile, the presbytery was moved further to the east, into the area of the former narthex of the Great Basilica, where the *khûrus* was installed, a newly developed part of the sanctuary in Egyptian church architecture.[64] The former large tripartite opening leading from the narthex

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"The Sasanians in Egypt—some evidence of historical interest," *BSAC* 31 (1992), 1–10; and ibid., "Zur zeitlichen Bestimmung der sasanidischen Eroberung Ägyptens," *MOYCIKOC ANHP: Festschrift für M. Wegner* (Bonn 1992), 5–8.

[62] H.-Chr. Noeske (personal communication); see also Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 184.

[63] Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 173–188.

[64] On this *khûrus* see *Coptic Encyclopedia* I (1991), 213f.

into the Great Basilica was walled up to be used as the place for the new apse.

For a short period the site flourished anew. The number of recognizable new houses points to a considerable population. August personalities of the Coptic Church were chosen to administer the site, several of them later becoming patriarchs of the see of Alexandria. However, this flourishing period did not last very long. Already in the first half of the ninth century attacks by marauding nomads from the desert are recorded, and the site is abandoned by its inhabitants. The *History of the Coptic Church*, compiled by Severus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (ed. Burmester II 64) mentions the site for the last time under Pope Shinûda I (859–880).

A short and final resettlement took place after that date, and apparently after a relatively long interruption, according to archaeological remains overlaying the western part of the original town. This resettlement lasted probably until the Fatimid period (XI/XII centuries).[65] The remains consist of many well-built houses as well as workshops like bakeries and mills. Carefully selected rubble-stones were used as building material. In the center of this settlement there was a small market place surrounded by several small shops.

Finally, in the middle of the thirteenth century, we learn from a text of some reliability, the relics of the saint were discovered by some bedouins while extracting stones from the ruins of Abû Mînâ. A Christian scribe with the name Shaykh as-Sanî'a al-Barmakî learned of this and brought the relics to his house, where they were finally identified and, after several adventures, were transferred to the church of St. Menas in Cairo in the time of the patriarch Benjamin II (1327–1339).[66] There was no resettlement of the area, however, in connection with this discovery.

VIII. *The local industry*

Among local industries the production of wine and pottery deserves primary mention. In the region of Abû Mînâ more than a dozen wine-presses are known. Some of them are of impressive dimensions with a production capacity that would have far exceeded estimated local consumption. The wine was thus undoubtedly produced for market. That a kind of commerce with the products of Abû Mînâ existed in antiquity we learn from some gypsum and clay amphora stoppers found at different sites in Egypt.[67] Many are sealed with the picture of St. Menas. Two examples discovered in the excavations at Elephantine were made of Nile mud,[68] a material which would not have been available in the region of Abû Mînâ. It is thus not to be excluded that somewhere in the Nile Valley an *emporium* for the commerce of Abû Mînâ was situated.

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[65] J. Kosciuk in: "13. vorl. Bericht," 409–422, fig. 16.

[66] Arabic text with a German translation in: F. Jaritz, *Arab. Quellen*, 251–257 (transl.), 451–456.

Small jars or amphorae with two handles, made of light reddish ware and manufactured in Abû Mînâ, have also been found in other early Christian sites in Egypt. However, the quality of the clay available in the region of Abû Mînâ is low, unsuitable for the production of cooking pots and wine amphorae. The amphorae from workshops in Abû Mînâ were used only as recipients for dry substances.

Local ceramic products most notably included oil lamps[69] and the famous pilgrim bottles (Menas flasks), which bore an image of St. Menas between two camels on one side and a cross or a small inscription like EULOGIA TOU HAGIOU MĒNA or, more simply, TOU HAGIOU MĒNA on the other side.[70] They were designed according to pilgrimage flasks of the time and were apparently intended for taking home drops of oil[71] as *eulogia* from lamps at the tomb of the saint, from the oil receptacle beneath the altar of the Martyr Church (Gruftkirche),[72] or from the other reliquaries in the lateral niches of the Martyr Church. Small vessels in the form of human heads (representing the pilgrims themselves) served apparently the same purpose.

The local ceramic industry also produced small figurines: horsemen with Phrygian hats and several different models of pregnant women. The horsemen hold shields in their left hands but no swords in their right. They resemble dolls but were probably bought by soldiers and consecrated in the churches to give the saint's protection for a coming battle.[73] Some of the figures of pregnant women are well painted and richly dressed with large rounded hats according to the fashion of those times. Buying these figures and taking them home after their consecration in the church allowed women an expression of their wishes to be cured from infertility, to have a safe delivery, or simply to win supernatural aid in matters of love and marriage.[74] Similar figurines of pregnant women found elsewhere were provided with small holes,[75] evidently to facilitate transportation and display. It may be also that such figurines were used in Abû Mînâ as votive offerings in the crypt. The plaster of the dome over the crypt contains hundreds of little rust-stains from iron nails on which such votive offerings for the saint could be hung. Apparently these pieces were often replaced by other votive gifts when the plaster in the ceiling was repaired, a procedure that—according to the visible traces—was carried out not less than seven times.

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[67] J. Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*, Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, Nos. 7001–7394 et 8742–9200 (Vienne 1904), 227, 8977, Pl. 21.; 239 9029, Pl. 23.

[68] Not published.

[69] The local production of oil-lamps is proven by the discovery of numerous forms for lamps in the excavations of Abû Mînâ.

[70] Kaufmann, *Ikonographie* 57ff.; Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*, 223ff., Pl. 21.

[71] See J. Engemann, "Eulogien und Votive," 223–233; several examples have been found in Italy and the Balkan, see P. Lopreato, "Le ampolle di San Menas e la diffusione del suo culto nell'Alto Adriatico," *Antichità Altoadriatica* 12 (1977), 411–428; I. Barnea, "Menasampullen auf dem Gebiet Rumäniens," in: *Akten 12. Kongr.* I, 509–514; I. Barnea, *Les monuments paléochrétiens de Roumanie* (Vatican City 1977), 232f. fig. 90,1 (Constanta); Z. Kádár, "Die Menasampulle von Szombathely," in: *Akten 12. Kongr.* II, 886–888.

[72] Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ* I, 65ff.

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[73] Török, *Coptic Antiquities*, 51f.
[74] Török, *Coptic Antiquities*, 30f.
[75] Török, *Coptic Antiquities*, 30ff., pl. 27–37.

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Abbreviations used

Akten 12. Kongr. I–II = *Akten des 12. internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn 22.–28.Sept. 1991* [= *JAC*, Erg.-Bd. 20, 1–2, 1995] part I–II "1.–13. vorl. Bericht" = "Abu Mena, erster vorläufiger Bericht," *MDAIK* 19, 1963, 114–120; part 2, *MDAIK* 20, 1965, 122–125; part 3, *MDAIK* 20, 1965, 126–137; part 4, *MDAIK* 21, 1966, 170–187; part 5, *MDAIK* 22, 1967, 206–224; part 6, *Arch.Anz.* 1967, 457–480; part 7, *MDAIK* 26, 1970, 55–82; part 8, *MDAIK* 33, 1977, 35–45; part 9, *MDAIK* 36, 1980, 203–227; part 10, *MDAIK* 38, 1982, 131–154; part 11, *MDAIK* 40, 1984, 123–151; part 12, *Arch.Anz.* 1991, 457–486; part 13, *Arch.Anz.* 1995, 389–423; part 14, in preparation.

Drescher, *Coptic Texts* = J. Drescher, *Apa Mena. A selection of Coptic texts relating to St. Menas* (Cairo 1946)

ArchAnz = *Archäologischer Anzeiger*

BSR = Papers of the British School in Rome

CorsiRavenna = *Corsi di cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Byzantina*

Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ. I* = P. Grossmann, *Abû Mînâ. I. Die Gruftkirche und die Gruft* (Mainz 1989)

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Lucius, *Heiligenkult* = E. Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche* (Tübingen 1904, repr. 1966)

R.E. = Pauly's *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*

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PILGRIMAGE AND THE CULT OF SAINT THECLA IN LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT

STEPHEN J. DAVIS

I. *We have this treasure in clay jars*

About 28 miles (46 km) southwest of Alexandria in the Mareotis district, the ancient pilgrimage city of the Egyptian martyr Saint Menas (Abu Mina), lies in silent ruin, baked by the heat of the desert sun. Fifteen hundred years ago, the dry Mareotis was dotted by small towns and cultivated plots,[1] and Menas' outlying shrine was a clamorous way-station for Christian pilgrims from Alexandria and from all over the Mediterranean world.[2] There, amidst the tumult of the pilgrimage festivals, the plaintive cries of the sick who came to the shrine for healing commingled with the sharp barks of artisans selling their special wares—small clay flasks (ampullae) holding holy water or oil, souvenir "blessings" (εὐλογίαι) stamped with the image of Egypt's national saint.

Thousands of pilgrims who streamed through the doors of Saint Menas' church carried these "blessings" with them as they reembarked on their journeys home. The humble clay flasks held the treasure of the saint's healing power, a power to which the pilgrims now could claim personal access. Today, hundreds of these ampullae survive in museum collections throughout the Mediterranean world; the geographical range of their discovery testifies to the scope of the pilgrimage practice related to Menas' sanctuary. Ultimately, the spread of the saint's fame from Egypt "to every distant land" (ϣⲁ ⲛⲉⲭⲱⲣⲁ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲏⲩ) would have been coextensive with the physical dispersion of these small clay vessels and of the pilgrims who carried them.[3]

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[1] In Graeco-Roman times, the larger freshwater Lake Mareotis and its Alexandrian port served as a crucial trade link for the transportation of goods and foodstuffs from the interior of Egypt. Under the Romans, the Mareotis district became an important grain-producer for the capital city. (Anthony de Cosson, *Mareotis* [London 1935], 40). A.J. Butler describes the Mareotis at the beginning of the seventh century, on the eve of the Arab conquest: "[T]here is abundant evidence to show that in the seventh century of our era there were many flourishing towns, palm groves, and fertile tracts of country, where now little is known or imagined to be but a waste of rocks and burning sands." (A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of the Roman Dominion* (2nd ed.; Oxford 1978), 9). The desiccation of the Mareotis gradually increased after the Arab Conquest—by the twelfth century, its lake had dried up completely. Lake Mareotis remained without water until 1892; today its dimensions remain considerably smaller than in antiquity. (See de Cosson, *Mareotis*, 70–82.)

[2] Pierre du Bourguet compares the site's fame to that of the present day Lourdes. (P. du Bourguet, *Coptic Art* [London 1971], 82).

The form of these ampullae deviates relatively little.[4] The body of the flasks are circular (or occasionally slightly oval) and flat, originally molded in two halves and then joined together. The neck of the flask and its two handles were added later by hand.[5] However, on a number of the ampullae that survive today, the more fragile handles, and often the necks as well, have broken off entirely. The numerous depictions of Saint Menas in low relief on the face of these flasks also follow a formulaic pattern (see Pl. 6a).[6] Within a circular border of raised dots or a laurel wreath, a curly-haired Menas (sometimes haloed) stands in a full frontal posture with both of his arms outstretched in the common pose of the *orans*.[7] Dressed in a short tunic, the saint is typically flanked by two camels who bend their heads reverently toward his feet.[8] Two small crosses frequently fill the space on either side of the saint's head, although on larger flasks this space more often accommodates a Greek superscription identifying the figure as "Saint Menas" (Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΜΗΝΑΣ).

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[3] The Coptic *Miracles of Saint Menas*, 42. M590, f. 19v.; in James Drescher, *Apa Mena: A Selection of Coptic Texts Relating to St. Menas* (Cairo 1946), 8 (108).

[4] The formulaic character of the ampullae stems largely from the circumstances of their production. The flasks essentially had to be produced en masse for a considerable, and constant, pilgrim clientele.

[5] Kurt Weitzmann, ed. *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York 1979), 576 (#515).

[6] On Menas iconography, see Carl Maria Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menasampullen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Funde in der Menasstadt nebst einem einführenden Kapitel über die neuentdeckten nubischen und äthiopischen Menastexte* (Cairo 1910). For some examples, see Drescher, *Apa Mena*, Pl. V and VI; E.D.J. Dutilh, "Symbolisme des Antiquités chrétienne," *BSAA* 6 (1904):43–51 (English version in same volume: "Early Symbolism," 61–68); Zsolt Kiss, *Les ampoules de Saint Ménas découvertes à Kôm el-Dikka (1961–1981)* (Varsovie 1989); Wulff, *Altchristliche und mittelalterliche byzantinische und italienische Bildwerke* 3.1, esp. Taf. LXVIII and LXIX.

[7] In the context of early Christian burial and the cult of the martyrs, the *orans* comes to symbolize the prayer and intercession of the deceased (or more specifically, the martyr) on behalf of the faithful viewer.

[8] The motif of the camels is connected to the legends concerning Menas' death—I will discuss these legends later. The consistency of this iconography of Menas with the camels, which also appears in a fifth century marble relief of St. Menas found among the ruins at El Dekhela (a town several miles west of Alexandria), may suggest that these images are reproductions of an original relief from Menas' tomb chamber at Abu Mina (K. Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 573–74 [#512]).

The reverse side of these Menas ampullae displays a fair diversity of subject matter. On the majority of the flasks, a similar image of Menas mirrors the front relief.[9] Other decorative motifs are occasionally represented—palm branches, garlands of leaves, medallions with crosses,[10] stars,[11] a ship,[12] and inscribed blessings of the saint.[13] Yet, most notably, on a number of surviving Menas flasks, the figure of a woman appears on the reverse—the image of the holy martyr Thecla "among the beasts" (*ad bestias*).[14]

Who was this Thecla? A disciple of the apostle Paul in the second-century *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (*ATh*),[15] she became perhaps the most celebrated female saint and martyr in the early Christian church. Thecla's story in the *ATh* is set in the towns of southern Asia Minor (Iconium, Antioch, Myra, and Seleucia), and that region remained the native soil for her cult in late antiquity—by the fifth century, her pilgrimage center near Seleucia had achieved international renown.[16] However, interest in Thecla as a saint also spread abroad throughout the eastern and western territories of the Roman Empire. The importation of Thecla devotion into one such region, Egypt, has until now been largely neglected despite a relative abundance of literary and material testimonia. In this article, I will begin to redress this imbalance as I show how Egyptian devotion to Saint Thecla was conditioned by late antique pilgrimage practice.

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[9] See, e.g., K. Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 576 (#515); E.D.J. Dutilh, "Early Symbolism," Nos. 3–6, 11–12, 23, 28, 29; O. Wulff, *Altchristliche*, Nos. 1363–64, 1372, 1374–75, 1377–86, 1389, 1391.

[10] See E.D.J. Dutilh, "Early Symbolism," Nos. 9, 22; O. Wulff, *Altchristliche*, Nos. 1371, 1376.

[11] See E.D.J. Dutilh, "Early Symbolism," Nos. 26–27.

[12] See E.D.J. Dutilh, "Early Symbolism," No. 222; O. Wulff, *Altchristliche*, No. 1387.

[13] Because of the limited surface space, these blessings are often abbreviated: see, e.g., O. Wulff, *Altchristliche*, No. 1365—ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΜΗΝΑ ΕΥΛΟΓ(ια); and No. 1390—ΑΓΙΟΥ ΜΗΝΑ ΕΥ(λογια).

[14] On depictions of saints and martyrs among the beasts in ancient Christianity, see H. Leclercq, "Ad bestias," in Fernand Cabrol, *et al.*, *DACL* 1A:449–462.

[15] For a critical edition of the Greek text, see R.A. Lipsius, and M. Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* I (Leipzig 1891), 235–272; also Léon Vouaux, *Les Actes de Paul et ses lettres apocryphes* (Paris 1913), 146–227. The fragmentary Coptic text has been edited by Carl Schmidt, *Acta Pauli aus der Heidelberger koptischen Papyrushandscrift Nr. 1* (Leipzig 1904). An English translation appears in Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha* II, rev. ed. (Cambridge and Louisville, KY 1992). The English translations in this article are my own, unless otherwise noted.

[16] See Gilbert Dagron, ed., *Vie et miracles de Sainte Thècle: texte grec, traduction et commentaire* (Bruxelles 1978), 55–79.

A quick summary of the *ATh* will be helpful for understanding the iconography of the ampullae and the social context of Egyptian devotion to Thecla. The story begins in Thecla's hometown of Iconium where the apostle Paul arrives preaching a decidedly ascetic gospel. After Paul's words induce Thecla to abandon her fiancee and family, she is brought before the local governor under charges of disrupting the institution of marriage. Sentenced to be burned at the stake, Thecla miraculously escapes death by means of a sudden hailstorm that quenches the fire. Freed, she wanders around the countryside in search of Paul. Thecla is finally reunited with Paul, and she asks him to baptize her, offering to cut her hair short as a sign of her unwavering commitment. However, fearing that Thecla's beauty may bring her other temptations, Paul puts off her request.

In the second part of the *ATh* Thecla persists in following Paul, accompanying him on a journey to Antioch. On the road leading into the city, a man named Alexander, attracted by Thecla's beauty, attempts to rape her. Thecla is able to escape by tearing Alexander's clothes and humiliating him in public. Angered, Alexander then uses his influence with the governor of Antioch to have Thecla thrown to the beasts. In the arena, Thecla is attacked by lions, bears, and finally raging bulls. In the midst of these attacks, Thecla sees a pool full of ravenous seals and baptizes herself in the water. Thecla is preserved from physical harm by a flash of lightening from heaven that strikes all the seals dead. After being released from the arena, Thecla dresses herself in the guise of a man and travels to the city of Myra, where she again finds Paul preaching. With Paul's blessing, Thecla returns to her hometown Iconium and begins to teach where Paul had taught. A short epilogue relates that Thecla's life ended near the coastal city of Seleucia, which became the site of her famous pilgrimage center (Hagia Thecla) in the fourth century CE.

The scene of Thecla's second martyr trial among the beasts (*ad bestias*) appears on sixteen different, published examples of Menas-ampullae (or ampulla fragments).[17] Fifteen of these sixteen examples (Cat. #1–15) derive from an identical iconographic prototype and date to the fifth or sixth century (480–560 CE).[18] (Yet another similar, unpublished piece is still stored among the inventory of flasks discovered at Abu Mina.)[19] On these ampullae (see, e.g., Pl. 6b),[20] Thecla stands with her body slightly turned; her curving torso leans slightly to the viewer's right. She is stripped naked to the waist, revealing the curves of her breasts. On the lower half of her body, an apron or long skirt drapes down to the ground; the material is tied in a T-knot at her waist and clings closely, as if wet, to the contours of her legs. Her face is bordered by hair that falls down around her shoulders and by a halo whose outline resembles a capital omega (Ω).[21] The features of her face remain indecipherable, worn by pilgrim hands and the passage of time.

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[17] For a description and catalogue entry for each piece, refer to "Appendix: A Catalogue of Published Ampullae with St. Thecla," below.

The scene seems to represent a conflation of martyr scenes from the life of Thecla, incorporating images most notably from Thecla's time in the arena at Antioch. Thecla's arms seem to be tied behind her—their lower halves are not visible. She is bound between two bulls, whose torsoes emerge from behind Thecla's body to the right and to the left.[22] While the bulls' bodies lurch away from Thecla in opposite directions, their heads turn inwards and they stare back towards the saint. Below the bulls, at Thecla's feet, crouch another pair of animals. To the right, a bear leans back slightly on its haunches with its head upraised.[23] To the left, a lion(ness) bows its head to lick Thecla's feet.[24]

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[18] Recently, the excavation of pottery remains at Kôm el-Dikka in Alexandria has allowed Zsolt Kiss to establish a chronology and typology of Menas flasks. As a result, by using stratigraphic methods, he has been able to date two ampulla-fragments with scenes from the life of Thecla to the period from 480 to 560 CE (which he labeled Phase I, the earliest period of ampulla production evidenced at Kôm el-Dikka): Kiss, *Les ampoules de Saint Ménas*, 14–18. Gabrielle Kaminski-Menssen has also argued on stylistic grounds that the Menas-Thecla flasks correspond with the earliest ampullae of Phase I that have come to light in Alexandria. (G. Kaminski-Menssen, *Bildwerke aus Ton, Bein und Metall*, Liebieghaus Museum Alter Plastik, Bildwerke der Sammlung Kaufmann 3 (Kassel 1996), 41f.).

[19] Josef Engemann, *per verbis*, April 9, 1997.

[20] Cat. #11. See Florence D. Friedman, *Beyond the Pharaohs: Egypt and the Copts in the 2nd to 7th Centuries AD* (Providence, RI 1989), 227, 140.

[21] O. Wulff, *Altchristliche*, 266 (#1361). Nauerth and Warns conjecture that Thecla may be adorned with a head of "sumptuous hair" that mixes with her halo (Nauerth and Warns, *Thekla*, 36–37).

[22] *ATh* 35.

[23] *ATh* 33.

[24] *ATh* 28. The depiction of the lion may also allude to the lionness' defense of Thecla in the arena. (*ATh* 33.)

An eleventh ampulla, taller than the others and dating to the seventh century (Pl. 7a),[25] manifests several minor variations on this scene of Thecla *ad bestias*. Within a circular medallion, a more crudely limned figure of Thecla again stands with her hands (tied?) behind her back, but now her upper torso is modestly draped in a robe that reaches to her feet. In this scene, she is flanked by only two animals—on the right an animal (probably a poor representation of the bear) turns to her with head upraised and mouth open, while on the left the mane of a large lion rears up at her. The bulls are absent; instead, an inscription arches above the scene, definitively naming the figure, "Saint Thecla"—Η ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΚΛ[α].[26] In a circular band around the border of the medallion reads another Greek inscription, which confers the "Blessing of St. Menas, Amen" (ΕΥΛΟΓΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΜΗΝΑ ΑΜΜ[ν]). On the opposite side, a similar blessing circumscribes an *orans*—most likely Saint Menas himself (Pl. 7b).[27]

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[25] See Fig. 2a. This red terracotta flask, with a slightly longer neck and a short base, stands 27 cm tall with a diameter of 17.5 cm (Catalogue No. 16; K. Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 576–77 [#516]). Weitzmann dates the piece iconographically, comparing the "schematic figures" on the flask to a relief portrait of Apa Schenute in Berlin; see John Beckwith, *Coptic Sculpture 300–1300* (London 1963), fig. 115.

[26] A sixth-century Egyptian oil lamp purchased by C.M. Kaufmann, now in the Liebiegshaus-Museum Alter Plastik (Frankfurt am Main), provides a close iconographic parallel to this representation of Thecla. C.M. Kaufmann, "Archäologische Miscellen aus Ägypten," in *Oriens Christianus* 3 (1913):108, fig. 3; Wolfgang Selesnow, *Bildwerke der Sammlung Kaufmann. Band II: Lampen aus Ton und Bronze* (Melsungen 1988), 168, Kat.-Nr. 302, Taf. 41. Thecla stands flanked by two beasts—a lion on the left, and a bear on the right. Unlike on the two-sided ampulla, Thecla is the only figure depicted (she is not paired with Menas). Instead of having her arms bound behind her, she raises her arms in the posture of an orans. In addition, the orientation of the beasts' heads is inverted: instead of rearing their heads back up toward Thecla, they now bow down at her feet (perhaps reflecting the iconographic influence of Menas' camels). However, despite these minor variations, the schematic representation of Thecla (e.g. her triangular torso) and the placement of the two animals is reminiscent of the ampulla in the Louvre. Two other oil lamps with similar depictions of Thecla are preserved in museum collections in Florence and Trier: Maurizio Michelucci, *La colleezione di Lucerne del Museo Egizio di Firenze*, Academie Toscana di scienze a lettere 'La Colombaria' 39 (Firenze 1975), 113–14, #398 (Tav. XXIII); Claudia Nauerth, Nachlese von Thekla-Darstellungen," in G. Koch, ed., *Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst und Kultur des Orients*, Göttinger Orientforschungen Reihe 2, Band 6 (Wiesbaden 1982), 17 and Tafel VI, Abb. 6.

[27] Kaufmann sees this *orans* as another representation of Thecla (*Zur Ikonographie der Menasampullen*, 141). However, the male lineaments of the figure—accentuated by an ensemble of toga, pantaloons, and staff—favor an identification of the figure with Menas. (Despite the literary legend about Thecla's cross dressing, early Christian iconography does not portray her in male guise).

The *orans* in question is flanked by liturgical accouterment. On the left, a hanging lamp or censor is suspended from a shell-shaped structure, perhaps a baldochin.

II. *The Pairing of Saints Thecla and Menas*

These ampullae with Thecla's image raise important questions about how pilgrimage travel may have served as a crucial social context for Thecla devotion in fifth, sixth, and seventh century Egypt. At the same time, however, these ampullae also prompt a more immediate question. Why does Saint Thecla appear on this pottery connected with Saint Menas' sanctuary in the Mareotis? That is, what factors suggested that these two saints should be paired in the iconography of late antique pilgrimage paraphernalia?

One factor behind the pairing of the two saints may have been the fact that Menas shared with Thecla a curious geographical connection with Asia Minor. Actually, little is known for certain about Menas as an historical figure—the early accounts of Menas' life are quite legendary (and sometimes contradictory) in character.[28] The two main sources, the *Martyrdom* and the *Encomium*, both portray Menas as a native Egyptian who is conscripted as a soldier under Diocletian and stationed in Phrygia.[29] There, when the emperor

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On the right stands what appears to be an ornate metal bowl with a domed cover and cross. Just as ampullae discovered in Palestine have provided scholars with images of the contemporaneous architecture and topography of the Holy Land, so too the miniature images on this Menas flask may hint at the decoration of Menas' sanctuary. On the *ampullae* of the Holy Land, see André Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1958); and Gary Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1982). While Weitzmann cannot find any iconographic parallel of such sanctuary images accompanying an *orans* of Menas or Thecla (Weitzmann *Age of Spirituality*, 577), the *Encomium* of Saint Menas relates that from the beginning an oil lamp hung in the sanctuary directly over his tomb. (*Encomium* 65.2.5–10; Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 65/144). According to the *Encomium*, an oil lamp also played a role in Menas' conception. At the feast of the Holy Virgin, his barren mother had dipped her finger in the oil of a burning lamp in hope of having a child, and the Christ child in Mary's arms had uttered the word, "Amen." When the child was born, his mother, "remembering the word which she had heard, 'Amen,' ... called his name 'Mena,' saying, 'If we put the 'a' first, we have 'Amen'; if we put it last, we have the name 'Mena.'" (*Encomium* 43–44; Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 43–44/133). This pun between the words "Amen" and "Mena" is preserved in the blessing on the ampulla: "Blessing of St. Mena, Amen."

[28] In his Introduction, James Drescher identifies significant problems with the sources for Menas' life (*Apa Mena*, i–x; cf. H. Delehaye, "L'invention des reliques de saint Ménas à Constantinople," *AnBoll* 29 [1910]:117ff.).

[29] There are three prose versions of the Greek Martyrdom catalogued in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca Sociorum Bollandianorum*, Editio altera (Bruxelles 1909), 175 (Nos. 1250, 1253, 1254). I will be referring to the version edited by C. de Smedt, G. van Hooff, and J. de Backer in *AnBoll* III (1884):258–270. The Coptic Martyrdom and Coptic Encomium, both based on the Greek Martyrdom, have been edited by Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 1–6, 35–72. For a concise summary of these accounts of Menas'

decrees that all citizens had to make offerings to the gods, the Christian Menas deserts the army and flees to the wilderness. Returning later, he confesses his faith publicly and refuses to take part in the sacrifices. As a result, the governor has him tortured and finally beheaded.

The tradition about the transfer of Menas' relics back to Egypt appears in both the Greek and Coptic legends, although the details vary considerably. In the *Martyrdom*, it is Menas' family who transports his body back to Egypt.[30] Only the Coptic version mentions the location of Menas' shrine—the martyr's body is placed on the back of a camel, who miraculously carries it (without human leading) from Alexandria to its final resting place. The eighth century Coptic *Encomium* is far more expansive. In that account, Menas' former regiment is reassigned to Egypt to defend against barbarian invasions in the Mareotis, and the soldiers take his "holy remains" with them as protection. On the voyage to Egypt, the presence of Menas' bones wards off the attack of sea monsters with "faces like those of camels."[31] Later, the theme of camels surfaces yet again—after the soldiers have arrived in Egypt and thwarted the barbarian invasion in the Mareotis, they place Menas body on the back of a camel in order to convey the martyr home with them. However, when the camel persistently refuses to budge, the soldiers conclude that God intended for them to bury the saint's body there. After a crippled boy from a nearby village stumbles upon the concealed tomb and is healed, the site becomes publicly recognized as Menas' martyrium, a place invested with miraculous properties of healing.

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life, see Martin Krause, "Menas the Miracle Maker, Saint," in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 5:1589–90.

[30] In the Coptic *Martyrdom*, Menas' sister takes up his remains and brings them by ship to Egypt. Interestingly, in one tradition, this sister is called Thecla (Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 99, note 2). However, this appellation is quite late and most likely derivative of the iconographic pairing of Thecla and Menas.

[31] This event serves as a not-so-subtle literary allusion to the iconographic tradition of Menas flanked by two dromedaries. The sea creatures in the story even mirror the posture of the camels on the ampullae: "Sometimes too they would take on a gentle nature and lower their long necks and do homage to the saint's remains" (*Encomium* 61.1.12–20 [M 590, f. 63r.], in Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 61/141). For the Coptic text, I provide page, column, and line references (along with the manuscript number and folio). Later, the allusion to the iconography becomes explicit—when the leader of the regiment depicts the image of Menas on a wooden tablet, he also includes "the likeness of the animals which he had seen at sea, being in the likeness of the camels beneath his feet, reverencing him." (*Encomium* 63.1.1–9 [M 590, f. 64r.); Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 63/142).

The variations in these literary accounts resist contemporary attempts to identify a "historical Menas." However, these legends nonetheless articulate common assumptions about Menas during the rise of his cult in late antiquity. Devotees would have identified him as a native Egyptian, martyred in Asia Minor and then returned as a saint to Egypt.[32] In this context, Menas' migrant reputation may have evoked compelling parallels with the status of Thecla in Egypt. Like Menas, Thecla suffers a "martyrdom" in southern Asia Minor—the region of Phrygia where Menas was martyred actually neighbors the district of Cilicia, home to Thecla's shrine at Seleucia. In addition, the importation of Thecla's cult to Egypt follows the same path as the geographical relocation of Menas' martyrium.[33]

Yet, such thematic and geographic connections between the saints do not, in and of themselves, fully explain the frequent pairing of Thecla with Menas on the ampullae. After all, the images or names of other saints with diverse regional associations are also paired with Menas (albeit less frequently). The monk Isidore of Pelusium (eastern Nile Delta) appears on a few clay fragments.[34] A single Menas-ampullae has on its reverse the haloed figure of a young Abbakon, martyred in Rome in 270 CE.[35] Another flask carries the monogram of Peter (ΠΕΤΡΟΥ)—perhaps the well-known archbishop and martyr Peter of Alexandria, or even the name of a local superintendent of Abu Mina.[36] Finally, a few other flasks pair Menas with a certain Saint Athenogenes.[37]

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[32] This predominant viewpoint contrasts with a much later Coptic tradition—reflected only in the introduction to Menas' collection of *Miracles*—that has the saint remain in Egypt during his entire life and martyrdom. (J. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 7–10/108–110; P. Grossmann, *Abu Mina: A Guide*, 9).

[33] It is interesting that the Coptic authors who write about Menas seem to have felt the need to defend the Egyptian character of his cult. In the Greek *Martyrdom*, while Menas' body is taken back to Egypt, there is no mention of Menas' shrine in the Mareotis. The writer may have been more interested in the Phrygian connections of the saint. By contrast, the Coptic *Martyrdom* includes an interpolated episode that has the saint's Egyptian shrine as its primary referent. In this new episode, after Menas is thrown into the hold of a ship and taken to prison (a journey perhaps intended to evoke a Nile voyage), Menas has a vision of Christ in which the Savior offers the him explicit assurances and promises concerning the foundation of the martyr's shrine in Egypt (Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 97–100).

[34] Isidore was a close relative of the Alexandrian Patriarchs Theophilus and Cyril, two important patrons of Menas' sanctuary. C.M. Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menasampullen*, 137–139, fig. 84. Cf. M. Gustave Lefebvre, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Egypte* (Cairo 1907), Nr. 727 (from Elephantine) and 732 (from Alexandria).

[35] O. Wulff, *Altchristliche*, Tafel LXVII and LXIX, Nr. 1359. Abbakon, martyred in Rome in 270 CE and buried on the Via Cornelia, was apparently Persian by background. In trying to find the slightest connection between Abbakon and Menas, Kaufmann makes a bit of a stretch when he suggests that the depiction of this Persian martyr may relate to the fact that Abu Mina remained unharmed during the Persian occupation of Egypt. It is more likely that the ampulla was made to

Thecla stands out conspicuously among this group as the only female saint to appear on pilgrim flasks from Abu Mina. What is it about her identity as a *female* saint that may have also motivated her pairing with Menas? The answer to the question relates to the way female saints like Thecla were often privileged as mimetic models for women's piety. In the minds of ancient male authors, a woman could imitate a male exemplar only in a partial and generic sense because she would always be encumbered by the differentiation of the female body and the assumed weakness of the female will. In this context, writers would present women as the most suitable ideals for other women, while rarely (and only reluctantly) citing them as examples for men.[38] Thus, Athanasius of Alexandria in his first *Letter to Virgins* urges his readers to emulate the Virgin Mary and a series of other biblical women, while in the *Life of Antony* he gives priority to the prophet Elijah as the appropriate exemplar for male monks.[39] Likewise,

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order for a patron with close connections with Abbakon's cult, or perhaps someone who was simply named after him.

[36] In raising the latter possibility, Kaufmann points to the absence of the title Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ and alludes to a known example of someone being assigned by the Alexandrian bishop to manage the shrine (Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menasampullen*, 141–142).

[37] Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menasampullen*, 143–145; cf. C.M. Kaufmann, "Archäologische Miscellen aus Ägypten, I." in *Oriens Christianus* 3 (1913):105–106 and fig. 1.

[38] In the Pseudo-Athanasian *Canons*, while the bishop's authority is marked as exceptional because he oversees the piety of both men and women, an underlying division between male and female models is otherwise assumed. "[M]any women and virgins and veiled brides have been entrusted unto [the bishop], and they come unto thee one by one and receive thy blessing. For that which is entrusted unto thee was not given (even) unto Moses, the greatest of the prophets, but unto Miriam his sister, which went before the women, while he himself led only the men. But thou art leader both for the men and women" (Pseudo-Athanasius, *Canon* 6, in W. Riedel and W.E. Crum, *The Canons of Athanasius of Alexandria: The Arabic and Coptic Versions* [London 1904; reprint, Amsterdam 1973], 13).

[39] Athanasius, *Letter to Virgins* 1.12, 21; *Life of Antony* 7.13. In his *Letter to Virgins* 1.21, besides Mary Athanasius also highlights Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, Susannah, Elizabeth, and Miriam as models of faith for the Alexandrian virgins. The Coptic text of Athanasius' first *Letter to Virgins* has been edited by L. Th. Lefort, *S. Athanase: Lettres festales et pastorales en copte*, CSCO 150 (Louvain 1935), see esp. 77.35–78.7; 82.19–83.12. English translation in David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford 1995), 274–91; see esp. 277, 280). The Greek text of the *Life of Antony* has been edited by G.J.M. Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine*, SC 400 (Paris 1994), see esp. 154–57.

in his treatise *On Virginity*, the fourth-century bishop instructs a local group of female monks to celebrate the life of Thecla herself as the preeminent model for women's ascetic piety.[40] Could the patrons of Menas' cult have chosen to pair Menas and Thecla in order to provide distinct, gendered models for male and female pilgrims?

Such a motivation is not unlikely. Artistic and architectural evidence related to the Menas cult also reflect a concern for distinctions between the sexes among the pilgrim clientele. A small ivory pyxis, perhaps an incense box or a reliquary, bears the familiar image of Menas as an *orans* between two kneeling camels.[41] What is especially noteworthy are the other details. Menas stands within an architectural setting (perhaps a schematic representation of his shrine), and welcomes the arrival of pilgrim supplicants approaching from either side. On the left, two women advance with hands extended toward the saint, while on the right two men mirror their posture. The groups are spatially separated from one another by the two pillars of the central architectural arch.

Actual divisions of space in the architecture of Abu Mina confirm an emphasis on the social differentiation of male and female pilgrim clientele. Excavations of the Baptistery (located immediately to the west of the Martyr-Church) have shown that, at least as early as the late fifth century, the building was divided into two rooms, each equipped with a font and a sunken basin. The provision of two rooms may have allowed male and female catechumens to be baptized separately, one group in the main enclosure (which was octagonal and covered with a dome) and the other in the smaller chamber to the south.[42] The physical separation of men and women in the Baptistery finds a secular parallel in the construction of the town's Double Bath, whose construction was completed in the sixth century. The plan of the bath includes "two similar, but strictly separated parts" designed to accommodate the respective needs of male and female pilgrims worn out from their long journey.[43]

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[40] Athanasius, *On Virginity* 211–220; Robert P. Casey, ed., "Der dem Athanasius zugeschriebene Traktat PERI PARTHENIAS," *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-historische Klasse 33 (1935):1034.

[41] Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 575–576, No. 514. The provenance of this sixth century piece has been debated. Beckwith argues that the ivory was carved in Constantinople, but it may have been a higher quality product of Menas' Egyptian shrine. See John Beckwith, *Coptic Sculpture 300–1300*, figs. 35, 36. While Weitzmann admits that it could conceivably have been produced at a Menas sanctuary outside of Egypt, he also notes that the style of the relief resembles that of a Wiesbaden pyxis with Nilotic themes (Weitzmann, No. 170), as well as that of a Maximinianus cathedral whose Egyptian provenance is disputed (Weitzmann, figs. 60, 65).

[42] Peter Grossmann, *Abu Mina: A Guide to the Ancient Pilgrimage Center* (Cairo 1986), 17–18.

The urge in early Christian pilgrimage to segregate the experience of women, by means of physical barriers as well as social mores, would have reinforced the presentation of individual, gendered models for female pilgrims. In this context, Thecla, then, seems to have been adopted as the female hagiographical partner of Menas within his cult. And yet, neither Thecla's identity as a female saint nor her status as a martyr from Asia Minor would have provided her with an exclusive claim to be Menas' partner. (Conceivably, other female saints from Asia Minor could have been selected.) The question remains—why was Thecla in particular selected for this role?

An episode from the *Miracles of Saint Menas* (*MirM*) supplies an answer.[44] One of the stories in that collection tells of a rich woman who decides to travel to Abu Mina in order to dedicate her possessions to the saint.[45] (In the Coptic, the woman remains anonymous; in the Greek, she is named Sophia.) Departing from her hometown of Philoxenitê, the port town on Lake Mareotis that accommodated pilgrims in transit to Abu Mina,[46] she travels alone on foot through the desert "until she arrives a mile from the martyr shrine of Saint Thecla" (**ϣⲁⲛⲧⲉⲥⲡⲱϩ ⲉⲡⲙⲁⲣⲧⲩⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲛ[ⲑⲁⲅⲓⲁ] ⲑⲉⲕⲗⲁ [ϣⲁⲧⲛⲟ]ⲩⲙⲓⲗⲓⲟⲛ**).[47] In the vicinity of this shrine of Thecla, a soldier sexually assaults her;[48] however, she is miraculously saved by Saint Menas, who arrives on horseback and carries her to the safety of his sanctuary.[49]

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[43] Grossmann, *Abu Mina: A Guide*, 20.

[44] The Greek text, from an eleventh century MS, has been published by Ivan Pomialovskii, *Zhitie prepodobnago Paisiia Velikago i Timofeia patriarkha aleksandriiskago poviestvovanie o chudesakh Sv. velikomuchenika Miny*, Zapiski Istoriko-filologicheskago fakulteta Imperatorskago s.- peterburgskago universiteta (Saint Petersburg 1900), 62–89. The fragmentary Coptic text, from a ninth century manuscript (M. 590) in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, has been edited and translated by Drescher in *Apa Mena*, 7–34. In addition, he also published "Further Miracles" of Saint Menas from another manuscript in that same collection (M. 585), ibid., 73–96.

Drescher argues that the Coptic text represents an earlier reading than the Greek text, pointing out several places where the Greek seems to err by mistranslating the Coptic (ibid., 105; see below, footnote 38). The dating of the work is difficult. The folkloric stories themselves certainly precede the ninth century Coptic MS—they probably reflect life at Abu Mina during the cult's heyday from the late fifth through the seventh centuries. In their present form, however, they can be dated no earlier than the reign of Anastasius (491–518 CE) based on a consideration of internal evidence (Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 112, note 1).

[45] This story appears as the fourth miracle in the Coptic collection. (*MirM* 22.1.15–22.2.32). The Greek text presents the story as Miracle 3.

[46] According to the *Encomium*, the prefect of the Emperor Anastasius (491–518 CE) had the village of Philoxenite constructed in order to provide for the needs of pilgrims after their lake crossing. The new town included hospices, rest-houses, and porticoes for rest, depositories for storage, and a market-place for provisions. Such a building project would have been consistent with the reign of Anastasius, who, because of his prudent financial policies, was able to spend "liberally on public

Could the pairing of Menas and Thecla on the pilgrim flasks be due to the proximity of another shrine dedicated to Saint Thecla in the Mareotis? This Miracle of Saint Menas survives as the only explicit witness to such a shrine in late antiquity, but its testimony

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works, and especially on the fortification of the frontiers" (A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602*, 1 [Baltimore 1964], 236).

While the *MirM* claim that Anastasius' prefect named the village after himself, there is no record of a prefect named Philoxenus under that emperor. Drescher notes that a Philoxenus served as legate under Zeno (479 CE), and another of the same name served as consul under Justinian (525 CE). (J. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 148, note 1). Zeno did actively promote the cult of Menas during his reign—he has been credited with the construction of the Great Basilica at Abu Mina, and the sanctuary city may originally have been named after him (Zenonopolis). (P. Grossmann, *Abu Mina: A Guide*, 13; J. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 147, note 1). The later Arabic text attributes the construction of the town to Justinian. (*Encomium* 70–71, in J. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 70–71/147–48). However, if the town of Philoxenité was, in fact, constructed under Anastasius, it more likely took its name from Philoxenus of Mabbug (ca. 440–523), a leading contemporary theologian favored by the emperor because of his pronounced Monophysite beliefs.

[47] *MirM* 22.2.27–31 (M 590, f. 26v.), in J. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 22/116. The Greek text claims that she actually "arrived at the temple of the holy and triumphant proto-martyr Thecla [ἔφθασε τὸν ναὸν τῆς ἁγίας καὶ καλλινίκου πρωτομάρτυρος Θέκλας]," (ed. Pomialovskii, *Zhitie*, 69, lines 11–12).

[48] The language of the story emphasizes the violent, sexual nature of the assault. Having espied the woman walking alone, the soldier "wanted to commit a mad act of debauchery against her (ἠβουλήθη τὸν τῆς ἀκολασίας οἶστρον πρᾶξαι εἶς αὐτὴν)" and grabbed hold of her (Pomialovskii, *Zhitie*, 69, lines 16–17). Later, after demanding sex—"Come here, let's sleep together [δεῦρο, κοιμήθῶμεν ὁμοῦ]"—the soldier utters a barefaced threat, "If you disobey, I have in my sword the power to kill you" (ed. Pomialovskii, *Zhitie*, 69, lines 22–23). Finally, despite Sophia's protest that he not coerce her (μὴ καταναγκάσῃς με τοῦτο πρᾶξαι), it is emphasized that the soldier "seized her violently (ἐκράτει αὐτὴν σφοδρῶς)" and "threw her down to defile her (ἔρριψεν αὐτὴν … φθεῖραι ἀυτὴν)" (ed. Pomialovskii, *Zhitie*, 70, lines 1, 6–7, 11–12).

[49] The Coptic text breaks off after the appearance of the soldier—"Behold, one of the soldiers …" The rest of the story is provided by the Greek text. In the end, not only is the woman rescued, but the soldier receives punishment at the hand of St. Menas. As the soldier prepares to rape the woman, he ties the reins of his horse to his foot to keep the animal from running away. However, when St. Menas arrives on horseback and rescues the woman, he also grabs the reins of the other horse and drags the soldier all the way to Abu Mina! This ordeal proves redemptive for the soldier—upon recognizing the glory of the saint, he repents and becomes a faithful devotee of Menas.

is not without merit as evidence for the shrine's existence. While the miraculous content of the *MirM* has led scholars to dismiss many of them as accounts of actual historical events, the stories reveal much about the social and material setting of Menas' pilgrimage center.[50] In the case of the miracle about a woman (Sophia) rescued from rape by St. Menas, the editor of the collection would have had little reason to fabricate "the martyr shrine of Saint Thecla" as the setting for the story; indeed, if he was writing for a readership familiar with life at Abu Mina, he would have had a compelling interest in portraying an authentic social milieu. In fact, by employing the definite article—*the* martyr shrine of Saint Thecla, instead of *a* martyr shrine—the editor (or original storyteller) actually seems to have presumed his or her audience's familiarity with the site.

Unfortunately, the physical remains of this shrine have long been cloaked by a veil of desert sand. Given this absence of archaeological evidence, one can only conjecture at the location and physical character of Thecla's martyrium in the Mareotis. On the question of the site's location, at least one scholar has hypothesized that Thecla's sanctuary must have been located near the village of El Dekhela whose name may hint at an etymological connection with the female saint.[51] (The modern settlement lies about eight miles from Alexandria on the Mediterranean side of Lake Mareotis.) In that locale, archaeologists have discovered fourteen monastic epitaphs, a marble bas-relief of St. Menas, and Corinthian capitals with Christian insignia—perhaps the meager remains of a fifth or early sixth-century monastic edifice.[52] However, the location of El Dekhela does not conform to the geography of the miracle account. The pilgrim Sophia encounters the Thecla shrine while traveling on foot to Abu Mina from Philoxenité, a town located on the *southern* shore of Lake Mareotis. Therefore, especially given the absence of the conventional description of a lake crossing, the shrine described in the *MirM* could not have been located on the northern side of the lake. Instead, it would have lain somewhere in the Western Desert between Lake Mareotis and the pilgrimage city of Abu Mina. A definitive resolution to this debate over the shrine's location of course must await a serendipitous discovery by some future archaeologist.

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[50] Although he decries the genre of the *MirM* as tainted by "paganism" and "puerility," Delehaye admits that such stories remain "precious documents for the history of the great sanctuaries," especially insofar as they grant insight into the place of saints' shrines "in the life of the Christian population" (H. Delehaye, in *AnBoll* 43 [1925]:65, cit. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 106–107).

[51] C.M. Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menasampullen*, 96.

[52] E. Breccia and W.E. Crum, "D'un édifice d'époque chrétienne à El-Dekhela et de l'emplacement du Ennaton," *BSAA* 2,1 (1907):3–12. The oldest of the inscriptions carries the date of 524 CE; therefore, Breccia dates the edifice to the sixth century at the latest (ibid., 11).

Even barring such a find, however, the reference in the *MirM* to a "martyr shrine of Thecla" ultimately provides invaluable insight into the pairing of Sts. Menas and Thecla on the ampullae. In particular, it reveals this pairing of Menas and Thecla as primarily a local phenomenon of the Mareotis—the iconographic expression of cultic cooperation between neighboring martyr shrines.

III. *Oral Tradition and Cultic Competition*

The *Miracles of Saint Menas* exhibit significant characteristics of oral folklore—their roots likely trace back to the storytelling of the pilgrims themselves.[53] Indeed, the legend about Sophia's miraculous deliverance from rape conforms to a recurrent topos in folkloric literature. The motif of a woman's escape from an undesired lover continues to appear in folktales from Iceland to India.[54] Consistent with the hagiographic interests of the *MirM* as a whole, this story in its present form celebrates Saint Menas' efficacious intervention on behalf of a woman threatened by sexual assault. However, given the striking locality of the woman's rescue ("a mile from the martyr shrine of Saint Thecla"), it is curious that this individual Menas legend accords with a story-form closely associated with the cult of Thecla in Asia Minor—the tradition of a wandering woman who escapes the threat of rape.

Stories about itinerant women threatened by rape appear several times in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (*ATh*) and the fifth-century *Miracles of Saint Thecla* (*MirTh*) connected to her shrine at Seleucia, two pieces of literature that, like the *MirM*, exhibit distinctive features of an oral background.[55] Thecla's original encounter with Alexander in the

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[53] Drescher describes the *MirM* as "quite independent short stories" that "largely derive from the common stock of folk-lore" (*Apa Mena*, 106).

[54] Stith Thompson, ed., *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, rev. ed. (Bloomington and London 1955), 377–79 (T320–328).

[55] On the oral background to the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, see especially Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia 1983); and Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of*

Acts of Paul and Thecla (*ATh*), in which she foils his attempt to rape her by tearing his clothes and humiliating him in public, serves as the prototype for later stories of rape in the Thecla tradition. When Alexander tries to forcibly seduce her on the open street, Thecla searches in vain for Paul and cries out, "Force not the stranger (ξένη), force not the handmaid of God."[56] The most common meaning of ξένη (stranger) is often qualified by the sense of "wanderer" or "refugee" in ancient literature.[57] By describing herself with the

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Apocryphal Acts, Studies in Women and Religion 23 (Lewiston and Queenston 1987). MacDonald notes that the plot movement, characterization, and scenarios of the *ATh* conform to certain "laws" of folk narrative derived primarily from the work of folklorists Alex Olrick and Alfred B. Lord. Virginia Burrus has discerned the folkloric background of the *ATh* by analyzing its plot structure in relation to other Hellenistic "chastity stories" about women. In addition, she identifies intriguing parallels to tale types in which the heroine is abandoned by the hero and ends up pursuing him in male clothing in order to reunite with him. (See tale types 881, 882, and 891A, catalogued by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson in *The Types of the Folktale* [Helsinki 1961], 298, 299, 306; cit. by Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy*, 55–58).

The *Miracles of Saint Thecla* (*Mirth*) also evince a folkloric background. The *MirTh* is a collection of stories that were edited and redacted by a male writer; yet, there is compelling evidence within the *MirTh* that ascetic women played a significant role in the oral transmission of these stories. In one of the miracles, a group of virgins in residence at Thecla's shrine in Seleucia communicate a privileged message from Thecla to the shrine's local male guardian—the Greek terms used to describe this communication convey the meaning of telling a story (ἀπαγγέλλειν and διηγεῖσθαι) (*MirTh* 32, line 28; Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 376–77). The oral background to the miracle legends becomes even more explicit in another miracle where one of the resident virgins is credited as the source for the story: the editor notes the fact that she accurately "recounted" (διηγεῖσθαι) the events directly to him. While the monastic community in and around the Thecla shrine at Seleucia served as the hub of this oral tradition, the stories of Thecla's miracles spread abroad and gained currency in a variety of other settings as well. The author of the *MirTh* reflects on the pervasive, local character of these oral legends when he interrupts a story of another female devotee (Dosithea) in order to reflect on his own task as editor. He remarks specifically that it would be impossible to reassemble the entire multitude of stories that could be recovered "from each city, land, village, or house" (*MirTh* 44, lines 15–16; Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 404–5).

[56] *ATh* 26.

[57] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed.; Oxford 1990), 1189. In antiquity, this association of the name "stranger" with itinerancy originally derived from the *Odyssey*, where Homer frequently describes the wandering Odysseus as a ξένος. In the *Odyssey* 6.206–209, Nausicaa, the daughter of King Alcinous, urges her handmaids to welcome Odysseus:

> On the contrary, this is some unfortunate wanderer (ἀλώμενος) that has come here. Him must we now tend; for from Zeus are all strangers (ξεῖνοι) and beggars (πτωχοί), and a gift, though small, is welcome. Come, then, my maidens, give to the stranger (ξεῖνος) food and drink … (Homer, *The Odyssey*, LCL, trans. by A.T. Murray, rev. by George E. Dimock [Cambridge 1995], 234–35).

feminine epithet ξένη, Thecla specifically emulates the itinerant apostle Paul whose enemies accuse him of being a "stranger" (ξένος) in their midst.[58] Yet, the setting of this scene supplies a more immediate context for Thecla's protest—Thecla is accosted by Alexander as she walks on the public road into Antioch. The designation ξένη evokes here the social context of travel and the danger of sexual violence for women on such journeys.

At the end of a later, expanded version of the *ATh*,[59] Thecla (now

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In the *Odyssey* 9.252–255 (Odysseus' story of the Cyclopes' cave), Odysseus' status as a xenos is once again intimately tied to his activity of wandering. When the Cyclopes spies Odysseus and his companions, he questions them:

> Strangers (ξεῖνοι), who are you? Whence do you sail over the watery ways? Is it on some business, or do you wander at random (μαψιδίως ἀλάλησθε) over the sea, as pirates do, who wander (ἀλᾶσθαι) hazarding their lives and bringing evil to men of other lands? (*Op. cit.*, 334–35).

Odysseus responds by requesting the hospitality due to such strangers,

> Do not deny us, good sir, but reverence the gods; we are your suppliants; and Zeus is the avenger of suppliants (ἱκέται) and strangers (ξεῖνοι)—Zeus, the strangers' god—who walks in the footsteps of reverend strangers. (*Odyssey* 9.269–271; tr. ibid.)

Note that, again, the designation xenos appears in connection with the verb "to wander" (ἀλάομαι), and with the idea of Zeus as the benefactor and protector of itinerant strangers (cf. *Odyssey* 8.572–576).

It is not unthinkable that a reading of the *Odyssey* may have influenced the *ATh*'s characterization of Thecla herself as a wandering ξένη, the privileged recipient of her God's protection against the dangers besetting her travels. Dennis R. MacDonald argues for the influence of Homer over the *Acts of Andrew* in *Christianizing Homer: The Odyssey, Plato, and the Acts of Andrew* (New York 1994). Observing that the genre of the apocryphal Acts exhibits affinities with the ancient historical novel, and that *The Odyssey* exerted strong influence over the novel form in antiquity, MacDonald concludes that at least "[i]n a derivative sense, one could claim that all apocryphal Acts are indebted to *The Odyssey*" (p. 6).

[58] *ATh* 8 and 13. Thecla's mother and fiancee, on two separate occasions, designate Paul as a ξένος in connection with their belief that he, as an unknown outsider, was disrupting the civil fabric of Iconium. Their description of Paul springs from their ignorance about Paul's identity and origin, an ignorance occasioned by Paul's status as a traveling apostle.

Throughout the *ATh*, Paul's missionary travels serve as a model for the shape of Thecla's discipleship: Thecla leaves her fiancee and family in order to follow after Paul and become a teacher of chastity like him. When Thecla is separated from Paul after each of her martyr trials, she wanders about in search of Paul. After surviving the pyre, she searches for Paul and is encountered by one of Onesiphorus' sons, who asks her, "Thecla, where are you going?" Later, after her liberation from the beasts, Thecla again "yearned for Paul and sought after him, sending in every direction." In each situation, Thecla's search seems to be conspicuously direction-less—her movement conforms more to aimless wandering than to a purposeful journey.

[59] Codex Grabii (G = cod. Barocc. 180 bybl. Bodleian. XII^{c}); Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, 271–272.

living as a solitary ascetic in a cave near Seleucia) is once again forced to elude the clutches of "unruly men" who try to rape her. In order to escape, she disappears alive into a large rock, which becomes the centerpiece of her shrine. The writer notes that this final "martyrdom," prompted by an act of sexual violence, represents the consummation of her "wanderings and travels and ascetic discipline."[60]

Finally, in the collection of *Miracles* (*MirTh*) reported to have been performed by Saint Thecla at Seleucia, two consecutive stories describe how the saint came to the rescue of female devotees imperiled by sexual assault outside the temple precincts.[61] In the second of the two (*MirTh* 34), two men from Eirenopolis, who come to the temple not to pray but to carouse, find "a virgin wandering about (περιπλανωμένη) outside the sacred enclosure."[62] The men attempt to seduce her, but Thecla intervenes before they can defile her.[63] When Thecla appears to the men, she asks them why they had driven her disciple away from "my house" (τῶν ἐμῶν οἴκων) in order to seduce her. This may suggest that the woman had been one of the resident virgins of the shrine; yet, it may equally indicate that she was a local, wandering ascetic distracted from making a visit to Thecla's martyrium.

In the Miracle of St. Menas, the social dislocation of the pilgrim Sophia, who leaves her home and husband in secret and travels on foot through the desert alone, resonates with the stories of such itinerant women connected to Thecla's cult. The description of how Sophia was discovered "wandering around" (περιπατοῦσα) outside Thecla's shrine in the Mareotis is starkly reminiscent of the account in *MirTh* 34 of a virgin "wandering about" (περιπλανωμένη) Thecla's sanctuary at Seleucia.[64] In both legends, the solitary wanderings of the women leave them vulnerable to sexual assault by men inspired by the devil,[65] and both are rescued by the miraculous act of a saint.

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[60] … τῆς ὁδοιπορίας καὶ τῆς περιόδου και τῆς ἀσκήσεως τῆς (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, 272).

[61] *MirTh* 33 and 34; Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 376–385.

[62] *MirTh* 34, lines 19–20; Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 380–383.

[63] In the end, the men are unable to escape the severe judgment of the saint; they die at the same time in the same place, drowning in the river off the ferry-boat that conveyed pilgrims toward the sanctuary.

[64] Ivan Pomialovskii, *Zhitie*, 69, lines 12–13; Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 380–383, *MirTh* 34, lines 19–20.

[65] In each case, the demonic inspiration for the deed is prompted by the men's/man's initial visual encounter with the women. In *Miracle* 34 of the *Life and Miracles*

In the *MirTh*, Saint Thecla comes to the virgin's aid, while in the story of Sophia, it is Saint Menas who intercedes.

The confluence of themes in this Menas-legend is remarkable—a story-type involving the attempted rape of an itinerant woman is again coupled with the designation of a Thecla shrine as local setting. Indeed, the parallels between the Menas-Sophia story and the legends related to Thecla's cult folklore seem too suggestive to explain away as mere coincidence. How might one account for these similarities? Given the folkloric background of Menas' *Miracles* and the proximity of a Thecla-shrine, I propose that the Menas cult here may have *appropriated and redacted an oral legend originally connected with Thecla's cult.* In such an original oral setting, Thecla would have been credited with thwarting the soldier's sexual aggression and rescuing her female devotee; the account of Saint Menas' intercession would, in this case, have derived from a later oral strata, or perhaps even from the literary redaction itself.[66]

Such a hypothesis raises the possibility not only of cultic cooperation, but also of competition between the two devotional sites.[67] This

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of St. Thecla (*MirTh*), the narrator pauses to note that the demon arranged to have the men find the woman (Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 380–83; *MirTh* 34, lines 19–21). In the story of Sophia in the *Miracles of Saint Menas* (*MirM*), immediately after the soldier sees her walking alone, "the devil entered into his heart [ἰδὼν τὴν γυναῖκα, εἰσῆλθεν ὁ διάβολος εἰς τὴν καρδίαν]" (Ivan Pomialovskii, *Zhitie*, 69, lines 14–15).

[66] Miracle 5 in the Greek tradition presents another example of folkloric borrowing. It tells of a crippled man who is told by saint to visit the bed of a mute, female devotee in order that they both might receive healing. (The initial shock of the encounter spurs the woman to shout out and the man to run away!) Interestingly, this story also appears as a miracle of Saints Cyrus and John at Aboukir (Egypt), and as a miracle of Saints Cosmas and Damian (*SS. Cyri et Iohannis miracula* 30 [*PG* 87.3520]; and L. Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian* [Leipzig and Berlin 1907], 162–64). See H. Delehaye, "L'invention des reliques de S. Ménas," *AnBoll* 29 (1910):131–132; and O. Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder: Untersuchungen zum Wunderglauben der Griechen und Romer* (Giessen 1909), 179–82. In addition, the account exhibits parallels to certain healings attributed to the pagan god Asclepius (Ibid.; cf. H. Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques* [Bruxelles 1905], 174). The role of the literary redactor in adapting this folkloric story-type is especially evident in the Cosmas and Damian account. Prompted no doubt by the impropriety of the saint's instruction, the redactor places in the saint's mouth an awkward warning: "Do not let anyone think that what happens is disgraceful, but rather let him devote himself to the guardian[ship] of the saints" (Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian*, 163, 12ff.).

[67] In the last twenty years, social theorists in the fields of political economy and organizational management have given the phenomena of institutional cooperation and competition a great deal of attention. Antonio Jorge comments that while cooperation and competition "constitute antithetical approaches to human interaction,... these two ingredients mix in an infinite variety of combinations, giving rise to a wide

rivalry comes to expression in the basic topography and plot movement of the Menas-legend. The woman Sophia is literally carried away from the Thecla shrine (where she had been accosted) to the doorstep of Menas' basilica where she finally takes refuge. Thus, in its redacted structure, the story manages to promote the shrine of St. Menas as a privileged locus of divine protection, while tacitly branding the area around Thecla's martyrium as unsafe, a place where unsuspecting female pilgrims might be ambushed at any moment if it were not for Menas' far-reaching benefaction.

The pairing of Menas and Thecla on the ampullae may then also be seen as an outgrowth of this cultic competition, an attempt by the Menas cult to subsume Thecla devotion under its own auspices. By coopting stories and images connected with the local Thecla cult (thereby assimilating certain recognizable patterns of Thecla devotion), the Menas shrine perhaps sought to capture and redirect the attention of her devotees in the region. In this way, cultic borrowing would have served competitive ends. This social dynamic approximates the concept of "isomorphism" in contemporary organizational analysis.[68] Organizations in competition—phone companies, fast-food restaurants, twenty-four hour convenience stores—come to resemble one another when they share the same institutional environment. Ancient pilgrimage was a comparable institutional environment: in pilgrimage, a set of social practices (religious devotion, travel, commerce) gave rise to isomorphic organizational forms (shrines, road systems, hostels, artisans' shops). Whether it be in contemporary business or in ancient pilgrimage, competition coexists alongside, and within, forms of institutional exchange and mutuality. Thus, while

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spectrum of different types of organizations" (Antonio Jorge, *Competition, Cooperation, Efficiency, and Social Organization: Introduction to a Political Economy* [Rutherford NJ and London 1978], 13). Lester Telser adds that "an efficient equilibrium requires an appropriate combination of both cooperation and rivalry" (Lester G. Telser, *A Theory of Efficient Cooperation and Competition* [Cambridge 1987], 1). Finally, the interdependence of these two factors has even led to the coining of a new word, "co-opetition"—see the book by A. Brandenburger and B. Nalebuff, *Co-opetition* (New York 1996), where the authors apply game theory to the strategic planning of organizations.

[68] See Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, ed. by Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (Chicago and London 1991), 63–82; originally published under the same title in *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983):147–160. Scott Cormode of Claremont School of Theology has been especially helpful in familiarizing me with recent literature on institutional theory.

the pairing of Menas and Thecla on the pilgrim flasks would have publicly conveyed a picture of concord and alliance,[69] such a picture may also have belied a subtle struggle for local precedence and power.[70]

IV. *Women's Itinerancy and Pilgrimage: The Social Practices of Thecla Devotion in the Mareotis*

In addition to disclosing faint traces of this cultic rivalry between Menas and Thecla, the story of Sophia from the *Miracles of Saint Menas* also provides other important clues about the social context of this Thecla shrine—especially, women's itinerancy and pilgrimage in the Mareotis. The story presumes that the life of this Thecla shrine was informed by the expansive pilgrimage network associated with Menas' martyrium. Sophia traverses the road from Philoxenité to Abu Mena, and she encounters one of the soldiers stationed in the area to protect pilgrims from banditry—"Behold, a man, a certain soldier from among the ones guarding the road on account of robbers ..."[71] According to the Coptic *Encomium*, the Emperor Zeno "assigned 1200 soldiers" to guard the pilgrim road, and arranged it so that the revenues of the Mareotis would fund the maintenance of this regiment.[72] The larger pilgrimage centers in late antiquity often benefited from similar forms of military protection.[73]

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[69] Peter Brown, observing the frequent pairing of pagan saints in late-Roman Christian communities—e.g. Peter and Paul in Rome, Felix and Fortunatus in Aquileia—explicates these doublets in terms of a public need for symbols of unity in the face of social division: "[T]he feast of a pair of saints was a feast of concord in a potentially deeply divided city" (*The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* [Chicago 1981], 97).

[70] William Christian, Jr., in his study of pilgrimage practice in sixteenth-century Spain, notes that the designation of two saints as joint patrons of a shrine most often resulted from social tensions in the life of the cult: "If on the most critical occasions, over a certain period, the general advocate consistently failed, then a community might associate with it a co-patron (often of the opposite sex) ..." (*Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* [Princeton 1981], 92–93). In such cases, the relationship between co-patrons was determined by both the extent and limitations of the saints' power.

[71] Ivan Pomialovskii, *Zhitie*, 69, lines 13–14.

[72] *Encomium* 69.2.24–31; 70.1.6–10; Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 69–70, 147. A later Ethiopic version of the *Encomium* expands the number of soldiers to 123,000 (E.A. Wallis Budge, ed., *Texts Relating to Saint Menas of Egypt and Canons of Nicaea in a Nubian Dialect* [London 1909], cit. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 147, note 2).

[73] A similar military regiment help secure the pilgrimage route to Thecla's center at Seleucia (e.g., *MirTh* 13 and 28; Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 127–28). Elsewhere

Notably, however, in the story of Sophia, this system of protection breaks down. Unlike many other pilgrims, who travelled in large groups for added protection,[74] Sophia walks the desert road alone and ends up being attacked by one of the very people hired to protect her! Just as in the stories related to Saint Thecla's cult in Asia Minor, so too in this story set in the shadow of an Egyptian temple dedicated to Thecla—the experience of solitary, itinerant women stands in tension with more routinized forms of pilgrimage practice.[75]

Might the legend of Sophia, then, reflect the fact that the shrine of Thecla was associated with wandering women—women who found themselves at the unprotected margins of institutionalized pilgrimage? The stories surrounding Thecla's cult in Asia Minor emphasize strongly her association with the women's itinerancy and asceticism.[76] Moreover, the demographics of late antique Egyptian asceticism provide an indigenous, cultural context for such a clientele. The monastic writers of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries occasionally refer to the life of ascetic nomads in the Egyptian desert. In the *Apophthegmata*, Abba Bessarion's life is compared to "that of a bird of the air, or a fish, or an animal living on earth, ... the care of a dwelling did

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in Egypt, 800 trained soldiers (*octingentas condomas militantes*) were assigned to protect the Sinai monasteries and hermits, according to the *Antonini Placentini Itinerarium* (CSEL 39, *Itinera Hierosolymitana*, 186, cit. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 147, note 3).

[74] Susanna Elm notes that female pilgrims most often travelled in groups, and in high style. Monks, priests, and occasionally bishops joined Egeria in her travels, and the entourage of Jerome accompanied Paula and her daughter Eustochium. In perhaps the most extreme example, Poimenia's supplies were carried with her on a ship with eunuchs, slaves, and the bishop Diogenes. See Susanna Elm, *"Virgins of God": The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 1994), 274; cf. E.D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire. AD 312–460* (Oxford 1982), 50–82; B. Kötting, *Peregrinatio Religiosa: Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche* (2nd ed.; Münster 1980), 363–81, 387f.

[75] On the one hand, independent female travelers had the virtue of remaining independent of the social ills attached to pilgrimage and martyr festivals; on the other hand, by appearing alone in public, such women were thought to present to men's eyes the danger of sexual temptation and faced the threat of sexual assault themselves. Various accounts decry the unjust appropriation of money, the drinking parties and orgies that accompanied such festivals (see e.g., *MirTh* 34); and Christian writers frequently condemned men who only attended church in order to lay eyes on women. See John Chrysostom, *Homily* 73, *in Matth.* (*PG* 58.676–677); Anastasius the Sinaïte, *De Sacra Synaxi* (*PG* 89.832), cit. Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 379, note 8.

[76] In addition to the community of resident virgins at Seleucia attested in the *MirTh*, one may note other prominent female pilgrims like Egeria, and Marana and Cyra, who made a point of visiting Thecla's shrine in Asia Minor (Egeria, *Travels* 22–23; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *A History of the Monks of Syria* 29).

not trouble him, and the desire for a particular place (τόπων ἐπιθυμία) never seemed to dominate his soul; ... he always lived in the open air (αἴθριος), afflicting himself on the edge of the desert like a vagabond (ὁ πλανώμενος)."[77] Itinerancy was one of the options for monks who sought detachment or alienation (ξενιτεία) from the world. Thus, Abba Ammonas to poses himself the question: "[S]hould I wander (πλάζεσθαι) in the deserts or should I go to a foreign land where no one knows me, or should I shut myself up in a cell without opening the door to anyone, eating only every second day?"[78]

The freedom of a life of nomadic asceticism posed an irresistible temptation for some foreign pilgrims visiting the monastic areas outside Alexandria. The fifth-century Gallic bishop Claudianus Mamertus (ca. 425–474 CE) thus exhorts his readers to eschew the external "pilgrimage of place" and embark instead on an internal pilgrimage of the soul: "On that account let us no longer stay as strangers (*peregrinemur*) in Alexandria, but turn away from Egypt, having sailed over the sea of errors and crossed the desert of ignorance, so that we may enter the homeland of truth and the country of promise."[79] The geographical scope of this exhortation suggests that Claudianus is imagining not Holy Land pilgrimage, but rather "the ascetic peregrinations of a monastic character."[80] In addition, the nomadic life also posed a temptation to local monks who viewed it as the culminative step in their renunciation of social attachments. In this context, the Alexandrian Desert Mother Syncletica (5th cent. CE) warns coenobitic monks against the hazards of such a lifestyle: "If you find yourself in a monastery do not go to another place, for that will harm you a great deal. Just as a bird who has abandoned her eggs causes them to be watery and sterile, so a virgin or monk cools and extinguishes the faith when she or he moves from place to place."[81]

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[77] *Alph. Bessarion* 12, in *PG* 65.141–144; trans. Benedicta Ward, *The Desert Christian: Sayings of the Desert Fathers, The Alphabetical Collection* (New York 1975), 42–43.

[78] *Alph. Ammonas* 4, in *PG* 65.120B–C; tr. B. Ward, *The Desert Christian*, 26.

[79] Claudianus Mamertus, *De statu animae* III, 11, ed. A. Engelbrecht, CSEL 11, 175; cf. *De statu animae* I, 22; CSEL 11, p. 80. See Hans von Campenhausen, "The Ascetic Idea of Exile in Ancient and Early Medieval Monasticism," in *Tradition and Life in the Church: Essays and Lectures in Church History*, tr. by A.V. Littledale (Philadelphia 1968), 239–40. Campenhausen's article originally appeared as a monograph in German as *Die asketische Heimatlosigkeit im altkirchlichen und frühmittelalterlichen Mönchtum*, Sammlung Gemeinverständlicher Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und Religionsgeschichte 149 (Tübingen 1930).

[80] H. von Campenhausen, "The Ascetic Idea of Exile," 240.

Judging by Syncletica's instruction, nomadic wandering was not only an option for male monks. Women, too, left homes and family for the open spaces of the desert. Evagrius Ponticus, the mystical writer who lived as a monk at Nitria, Egypt, at the end of the fourth century, feels the need to warn virgins to "flee the stories of wandering old women" (διηγήματα γραῶν φεῦγε κυκλευουσῶν).[82] In one of his many correspondences (*Letter* 7), Evagrius beseeches a bishop "to prevent those (women) who have renounced the world from needlessly walking around (Syr. *rdā'* ~ Gk. πορεύομαι) over such roads."[83] In another letter (*Letter* 8), Evagrius urges his exhortee to teach virgins and monks "not to take a long journey or to travel (Syr. *rdā'* ~ Gk. πορεύομαι) through deserted lands without examining the matter seriously."[84] While part of his concern may lie with the dangers and distractions of conventional pilgrimage, Evagrius especially questions the propriety of women who seek to retreat from the world by means of incessant wandering: "I wonder whether a woman roaming about (Syr. *meṯkarkā'* ~ Gk. περιαγομένη) and meeting myriads of people can achieve such a goal (of withdrawal from the world)."[85]

Attempts by monastic and ecclesiastical leaders to curb the movements of women were legion in late antiquity,[86] but the warnings voiced by Evagrius, Syncletica, and Claudianus Mamertus seem to reflect their acquaintance with a specific caste of itinerants within Egyptian monasticism.[87] These "perpetual pilgrims" would have posed special problems for church leaders in their attempts to regularize ascetic (and pilgrimage) practice in the Egyptian desert.[88] And yet, at the same time, the monasteries and shrines that dotted the desert landscape west and southwest of Alexandria—the very institutions patronized by such church leaders—would have served as a subsistence network, a critical source of food and temporary shelter, for ascetic pilgrims and wanderers of all descriptions.[89]

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[81] *Life of Syncletica* 94 (*PG* 28.1545); cf. *Alph. Syn.* 6 (*PG* 65.421D–424A).

[82] Evagrius Ponticus, *Sententiae ad Virginem* 13, ed. Hugo Gressmann, *Nonnenspiegel und Mönchspiegel des Euagrios Pontikos*, TU 39.4 (Leipzig 1913), 147. In his *Sententiae ad Monachos*, Evagrius gives ascetic men a similar warning concerning the false tales of "wandering monks [κυκλευταὶ μοναχοί]," (Evagrius Ponticus, *Sententiae Monachos* 81, ed. Gressmann, ibid., 160, cit. Elm, *"Virgins of God"*, 278.)

[83] Evagrius Ponticus, *Letter* 7, ed. W. Frankenberg, *Euagrios Ponticus*, Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 13.2 (Berlin 1912), 572–3 ($164^{a\alpha}$), trans. Elm, *"Virgins of God"*, 277. The Greek I provide is from Frankenberg's retranslation of the Syriac text.

[84] Evagrius Ponticus, *Letter* 8, ed. Frankenberg, *Euagrios Ponticus*, 572–573 ($164^{a\beta}$), tr. Elm, *"Virgins of God"*, 278. Elm infers that Evagrius speaks of virgins and monks when he refers to the exhortee's "sisters" and "sons" who have "renounced the world."

[85] Evagrius Ponticus, *Letter* 8, ed. Frankenberg, *Euagrios Ponticus*, 572–573 ($164^{b\alpha}$). The addressees of Evagrius' *Letters* 7 and 8 are never named although internal evidence suggests a connection with ascetic communities in Palestine. In *Letter* 7, Evagrius writes concerning "the chaste deaconess Severa," who is identified elsewhere (*Letters* 19 and 20) as a member of Melania the Elder's monastic society in Jerusalem (Elm, *"Virgins"*, 278). Evagrius maintained a regular correspondence with Melania while he was in Egypt, and *Letter* 8 may have been addressed to her as well.

[86] E.g., see Athanasius' *Letter to Virgins* 1.13, where he presents the Virgin Mary as a model of settled ascetic existence: "Nor did [the Virgin Mary] have an eagerness

In this context, amidst the throngs of pilgrim clientele who flocked toward St. Menas' sanctuary, the shrine of Thecla in the Mareotis may have held a particular attraction for wandering women who felt themselves called to imitate Thecla's own ascetic homelessness (ξενιτεία).

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to leave her house, nor was she at all acquainted with the streets; rather, she remained in her house being calm, imitating the fly in honey ... And she did not acquire an eagerness to look out the window, rather to look at the Scriptures. And she would pray to God privately ... And she did not come and go, but only as was necessary for her to go to the temple" (ed. L.-Th. Lefort, *S. Athanase: Lettres festales et pastorales en copte*, CSCO 150, 78.13–16; 79.17–19, trans. Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 277–78). Such efforts to keep ascetic women restricted to their dwelling place extended even to the policing of their thoughts: "When you sing psalms, let your mind agree with your spirit and let your thoughts not wander (*yacim*) outside ... 'because the Lord lodges solitaries in a house'" (Athanasius, *On Virginity* 92–93, 95–96, ed. Robert P. Casey, "Der dem Athanasius zugeschriebene Traktat PERI PARTHENIAS," 1029, my translation). Cf. *On Virginity* 12: "Do not wander (*yacim*) outside by means of your imagination" (Casey, 1027).

[87] Even in *Letters* 7 and 8, where Evagrius may be writing to Palestinian monastic communities, his concerns about wandering women are conditioned by his experience in the Egyptian monastic center at Nitria.

[88] Commenting on this literature, Susanna Elm writes, "[W]omen who chose perpetual *xeniteia* were clearly condemned. These differentiations in our sources can be seen as attempts to control and steer. Clearly, women (and men) on the road were even less 'controllable' by ecclesiastical authorities than those in the desert, and, living in perpetual motion, the creation of ascetic practices was solely at their own discretion, unencumbered by the demands for obedience and regularity which were the staple of 'orthodox' ascetic life" (Elm, "*Virgins*", 281).

[89] William Christian observes a similar phenomenon in sixteenth-century Spain: "The existence of this kind of national network, the chains of hospices for pilgrims, and the hospitality for pilgrims at larger shrines, encouraged the flowering of a kind of pilgrim vagabond" (William Christian, *Local Religion*, 122). In particular, he points to the account of "a man possessed by the devil from Daimiel, who tried a number of shrines before he was cured in Ciudad Real in 1580," and "other pilgrims, like a woman in Persiles and Segismunda who had worked out an annual itinerary, who were essentially vagrant tourists for whom the various shrines were a means of livelihood and spiritual entertainment" (Ibid., 123).

A series of Egyptian legends about female, monastic transvestites, set in the middle of the fifth to the beginning of the sixth century CE, seems to confirm Thecla's association with itinerant, ascetic women in Egypt.[90] The stories take the life of Thecla as their subtext—in each, a young woman disguises herself in male clothing in order to leave home secretly for the ascetic life. The transvestite disguise allows the woman to travel about freely, and eventually to assimilate herself undetected into a community of male monks where she advances in monastic piety. In the context of this study, the geographical setting of these stories is significant—the young women most often follow a path from (or via) Alexandria into the monastic territories west of the city. In two of these legends, the Greek *Life of Apolinaria* and the Coptic *Life of Hilaria*, the protagonists' pilgrimage routes actually take them through the Mareotis to Abu Mina (and from there southward to the monastic center at Scetis).[91]

That the life of Thecla serves as the prototype for this group of

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[90] See John Anson, "The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motif," *Viator* 5 (1974):1–32, esp. 11f. The following seven legends have a specifically Egyptian setting:

1) Anastasia: Latin text in *Acta Sanctorum* March 2.40–41.

2) Apollonaria/Apolinaria: in *Acta Sanctorum* Jan. 1.257–261; James Drescher, *Three Coptic Legends: Hilaria. Archellites. The Seven Sleepers*, Suppléments aux ASAE 4 (Cairo 1947), 152–161.

3) Athanasia: Latin and Greek texts in *Acta Sanctorum* Oct. 4.997–1000.

4) Euphrosyne: Latin text in *Acta Sanctorum* Feb. 2.533–544; Syriac text and English translation in Agnes Smith Lewis, ed., *Select Narratives of Holy Women from the Syro-Antiochene or Sinai Palimpsest*, Studia Sinaitica 9–10 (London 1900).

5) Hilaria: in *PO* 11 (1916):624–638; Coptic version and English translation in James Drescher, *Three Coptic Legends*, 1–13, 69–82.

6) Theodora: Latin text in *Acta Sanctorum* Sept. 3.788–791.

7) Eugenia: Latin text in *PL* 73.605–624; Greek metaphrast version in *PG* 116.609–652; Syriac text and English translation in Agnes Smith Lewis, *Select Narratives*; English translation of the Armenian text in F.C. Conybeare, ed., *The Apology and Acts of Apollonius and Other Monuments of Early Christianity* (London and New York 1894), 134–189.

[91] While Hilaria's stop at Abu Mina is only mentioned in passing, Apolinaria's visit is described in detail. The story tells how Apolinaria, along with a eunuch and an old man, take a boat across Lake Mareotis, disembark at Philoxenité, and traverse the desert road to Abu Mina.

The fact that six of these transvestite virgins end up pursuing the monastic life in the desert of Scetis and the Wadi Natrun near Alexandria (the seventh, Eugenia, settles in an unnamed monastic territory near Alexandria), has prompted Anson to argue that these legends "may have been mass-produced by a school of Egyptian scribes at a time when the desert of Scetis had become the acknowledged center of the monastic movement" (J. Anson, "The Female Transvestite," 12; cf. E. Amélineau, legends is made explicit in the *Life of Eugenia*.[92] The (fictional) events of the story are set much earlier (during the reign of Commodus, 180–192 CE), and Eugenia is portrayed as the wealthy daughter of Philip, the Roman eparch assigned to Alexandria.[93] Into Eugenia's hands falls a copy of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* ("the book of the story of the discipleship of Thecla the holy virgin, and of Paul the Apostle").[94] While traveling in her litter from Alexandria to a nearby village along with her eunuchs and servants, she studies passages from this "book of Thecla."[95] Eugenia's reading has an immediate effect on her—imitating Thecla's example, she cuts her hair and dresses herself like a man, a sign of her rejection of family ties and

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"Histoire des deux filles de l'empéreur Zenon," *PSBA* 4,10 [Feb. 1888]:181–206). In this context, Anson describes these works as a "literary cycle" that eventually became widely disseminated in the Latin West by the sixth century (Anson, 13; cf. René Aigrain, *L'hagiographie: ses sources, ses méthodes, son histoire* [Poitiers 1953], 229–230). A folkloric study of these legends may also elucidate some of their shared scenarios and plot motifs, although more detailed work needs to be done in this area before specific conclusions can be drawn.

[92] James Drescher notes a number of legendary features the *Life of Eugenia* shares with the *Life of Hilaria* (Drescher, *Three Coptic Legends*, 123–24).

[93] The early setting of the story induces Conybeare (*The Apology and Acts*, 147–56) to date the legend as early as the second century (he also posits a late third century recension). However, Conybeare's arguments prove untenable. The legend more likely derives from a time period much closer to that of the other transvestite legends from Egypt, perhaps the fifth century. Such a date is confirmed by external witnesses. The late sixth-century poet and bishop of Poitiers, Venantius Fortunatus (ca. 535–610), juxtaposes the names of Eugenia and Thecla in one of his poems (*Carmina*, ed. Frid. Leo, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 4, 1 [Berlin 1881], 192; cit. Conybeare, ibid., 148):

> ... we are encouraged that you seek after those things
> that Christ granted Eugenia and gentle Thecla.

Almost a century earlier, Avitus, bishop of Vienne (450–518), outlines the story of Eugenia in his poem *De laude castitatis* (*PL* 59.378B, cit. Conybeare, ibid., 148).

[94] *Life of Eugenia* 2, trans. Lewis, *Select Narratives of Holy Women*, 2, fol. 22a; cf. Conybeare, *Apology and Acts* 158. The mention of *Acts of Paul and Thecla* appears only in the Syriac and Armenian versions; the Latin substitutes "the teaching of that most blessed Apostle Paul (*eius beatissimi Pauli apostoli doctrina*)" (*PL* 59.607B). In fact, the Latin omits any and all references to the female saint. In this context, the textual tradition seems to support the hypothesis that the Syriac and Armenian versions offer an earlier reading. It is more likely that Thecla, given her apocryphal associations, would have been deleted from the original text, rather than added to it at a later time.

[95] *Life of Eugenia* 3 tr. Lewis, *Select Narratives of Holy Women*, 3 (fol. 22b); cf. Conybeare, *Apology and Acts*, 158. In the Latin, Eugenia's travels out to the suburbs of Alexandria for the express purpose of mingling with the Christians (*PL* 73.607C).

commitment to the virginal life. (This physical transformation is central to each of the transvestite legends.) The connection to Thecla is reinforced later; when the author describes the reaction of Eugenia's household upon discovering her absence, he borrows a phrasing reminiscent of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (10), "For her parents were mourning for their daughter; and her brothers for their sister; and her servants for their mistress."[96] In the *ATh*, it is Thecla's family (her mother, fiancee, and maidservants) who mourn a similar loss.[97]

Eugenia's change of appearance, besides facilitating her break from family, also allows her the freedom to travel on her own. Abandoning the rest of her retinue, Eugenia and two of her eunuchs walk along the road where they soon mingle with a large crowd of Christian pilgrims singing songs, led the bishop Helenus."[98] Under the guidance of Helenus, Eugenia eventually establishes herself *incognito* at a local male monastery (under the name of Eugenius). There, as a result of her exemplary piety, she is promoted to head abbot and exercises the gift of healing. This gift of healing results in a major twist in the plot when Eugenia/Eugenius is falsely accused of making sexual advances to a woman who had been healed by her. In defense of herself and her fellow monks, she is finally forced to reveal her true identity at the court of the Alexandrian governor.[99]

Although the *Life of Eugenia* is thoroughly legendary, certain details reflect implicit social assumptions about pilgrimage and Thecla devotion in late antique Egypt. Consider, for instance, the picture of Eugenia reading a copy of the *ATh* as she traveled on the road out from Alexandria. Early Christian pilgrimage accounts regularly highlight the reading of sacred texts as a constituent part of the pilgrim experience. The late fourth-century pilgrim Egeria reports that during her visit to Thecla's martyrium at Seleucia (Asia Minor) she and the other pilgrims "read the Acts of Saint Thecla" (... *et lectione actus sanctae Teclae*).[100] Sometimes pilgrims even carried private texts with them to read en route to a holy place. The fourth-century bishop John Chrysostom refers to the practice of wealthy women in his time carrying miniature Gospels on chains around their necks.[101] In the fifth century, the Egyptian monk Isidore of Pelusium makes a similar connection in one of his letters when alludes to "the women now (who wear) the miniature Gospels (τὰ εὐαγγέλια μικρά)."[102] Such miniature codices, especially popular in Christian circles in antiquity,[103] fulfilled an apotropaic (protective) as well as a devotional function for those carrying them.[104]

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[96] *Life of Eugenia* 8, tr. Smith, *Select Narratives*, 12, fol. 31b; cf. Conybeare, *Apology and Acts*, 168. The Latin and Greek editors retain this reading. Latin: *lugebant universi confusi: parentes filiam, sororem fratres, servi dominam* (*PL* 73.610D–611A). Greek: ἐπεβοῶντο πικρῶς, οἱ πατέρες τὴν θυγατέρα, οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τὴν γνησίαν, οἱ δοῦλοι τὴν δέσποιναν (*PG* 116.624B).

[97] *ATh* 10: "And [the members of Thecla's household] wept bitterly, Thamyris missing his betrothed, Theocleia her child, the maidservants their mistress (Καὶ οἱ μὲν ἔκλαιον δεινῶς Θάμυρις μὲν γυναικὸς ἀστοχῶν, Θεοκλεία δὲ τέκνου, αἱ δὲ παιδίσκαι κυρίας)" (R.A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* I [Leipzig 1891], 243; Léon Vouaux, *Les Actes de Paul et ses lettres apocryphes* [Paris 1913], 166).

[98] *Life of Eugenia* 4, tr. Smith, *Select Narratives*, 5, fol. 25a. Cf. Conybeare, *Apology and Acts*, 161; *PL* 59.608B.

[99] After Eugenia's revelation, her family is converted and "all Alexandria was like one church" (*Life of Eugenia* 16, tr. Smith, *Select Narratives*, 22, fol. 41a; cf. Conybeare, *Apology and Acts*, 178; *PL* 59.615C). The rest of the story narrates her father's martyrdom and burial in Egypt (chs. 17–20), and Eugenia's own martyrdom (along with a virgin named Basilia) in Rome (chs. 20–30). The events in Rome may actually represent a later addition to the original legend, an attempt to yoke the reputation of the Alexandrian virgin more closely to the Roman cult of the martyrs. Conybeare himself noted a disjuncture in the text at chapter 20. While I disagree with his arguments as to chronology, I agree that Eugenia's martyrdom in Rome probably derived from a later recension of the legend.

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[100] Egeria, *Travels* 23.5–6 (my translation). Egeria's response to the reading of the Acts indicates with how much reverence that text was held. After recalling the reading, she notes that "I gave heartfelt thanks to God for his mercy in letting me fulfill all my desires so completely, despite all my unworthiness" (tr. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 122). Indeed, her reading of the *ATh* at Seleucia parallels her reading of Scripture during her stops at pilgrim sites in the Holy Land.

[101] John Chrysostom, *Homily* 72 (p. 703B ad Mt. 23,5): ὡς πολλαὶ νῦν τῶν γυναικῶν εὐαγγέλια τῶν τραχήλων ἐξαρτῶσαι ἔχουσι, cit. Eduard Nestle, "Evangelien als Amulet am Hals und am Sofa," *ZNW* 7 (1906):96.; ed. Ernst Schaeffer, *Voluminum codicumque fragmenta graeca cum amuleto christiano*, Papyri Iandanae 1 (Leipzig 1912), 31; re-ed. Leiv Amundsen, "Christian Papyri from the Oslo Collection," *Symbolae Osloenses* 24 (1945):140, note 3.

[102] Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 150.2, cit. E. Schaefer, *Voluminum*, 31. Cf. Gregory of Tours' epitome of the *Acts of Andrew*, where a woman named Trophima has the Gospel "on her bosom" (*Liber de Miraculis Beati Andreae Apostoli* 23, ed. M. Bonnet, in *Monumenta Germaniae* Historica I. Scriptures Rerum Merovingicarum. Gregorii Turonensis Opera [ed. W. Arndt and B. Kruesch], i.2 [Hanover 1885] 821–46).

[103] Forty-seven out of the fifty-five known miniature codices contain Christian texts; eight of these contain apocryphal works: Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven and London 1995), 235–36; cf. C.H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London 1979), 12.

[104] Chrysostom's mention of miniature Gospels worn by women in *Homily* 72 (cited above) comes in the context of his commentary on Matthew 23:5, which disparages the use of amulets (φυλακτήρια). Indeed, elsewhere, Chrysostom observes that those whose suspend Gospels from their necks view the book "as a powerful amulet and carry them about in all places wherever they go" (John Chrysostom, *Hom. ad. pop. ant.* 19.14; cf. *Hom. in Cor.* 43). On "The Magical Use of Christian Books," see Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 237–241; cf. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 10–11.

Might the account of Eugenia perusing the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* as she traveled give us a glimpse of a similar social practice related to women's pilgrimage and Thecla devotion in Egypt? The textual tradition of the *ATh* in Egypt bears out this supposition: two of the Greek manuscripts of the *ATh* discovered in Egypt are from miniature codices. The smaller of the two (7.3 by 6.7 cm), a vellum leaf from Oxyrhynchus, dates to around the fifth century.[105] The second example, a parchment sheet found at Antinoopolis from the fourth century, was originally part of a deluxe codex probably owned by a well-to-do Christian—the skin is "thin and translucent to an unusual degree" and the script is delicately written.[106] Such pocket codices of the *ATh* would have been eminently portable; they would have lent themselves well to the needs of pilgrim travel.[107] Remarkably, the picture of the Eugenia reading the *ATh* in transit not only matches with other ancient views on books and their portable use, it also conforms to specific manuscript evidence related to Thecla in Egypt.[108]

The scene in which Eugenia publicly reveals her identity, may also allude to a familiar artifact connected with Egyptian pilgrimage and the cult of Thecla. After Eugenia heals a woman named Melania, the wife of an Alexandrian senator, the latter tries to seduce her, thinking she is a man. When Eugenia refuses, the spurned Melania goes back to Alexandria and lodges a public accusation against Eugenia before the governor, claiming that it was Eugenia who made sexual advances against her. Brought before the court in fetters, Eugenia decides she must confess her identity as a woman in order to protect the reputation of the Egyptian monks. First, she explains, "I became a man for a short time, being emulous and imitating my teacher Thecla: she who despised and rejected the desires of this world, and became worthy of the good things of heaven by means of her chastity and her life."[109] Then, as visible proof of her sex, Eugenia rips open her garment to reveal her breasts to the crowd.

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[105] P.Oxy. I.6. The manuscript contains text from *ATh* 8 and 9. Grenfell and Hunt date the leaf according to paleographic criteria, noting its "somewhat irregular uncial" script (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 1 [London 1898], 9).

[106] P.Ant. I.13 (7.2 by 8.7 cm), ed. C.H. Roberts, *The Antinoopolis Papyri* 1 (London 1950), 26–28. On the basis of paleography, Roberts dates the text slightly earlier than a similar pocket codex containing the text of Jonah (dated to the fourth or fifth century). Cf. H.C. Youtie, "A Codex of Jonah," *HTR* 38 (1945):195f.

[107] Roberts writes, "Some of the parchment codices may have been imports into Egypt, brought by travellers or pilgrims at a time when Egypt was open to the outside world (and particularly the Christian world) as it had not been two centuries earlier" (*Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 11).

[108] The connection between Thecla devotion and literacy also has precursors in the legends connected to the saint's cult in Asia Minor. In the *MirTh*, Thecla is described often as a lover of letters (*MirTh* 37, 38, 41; see Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 129). In *MirTh* 45, a woman named Xenarchis receives a book as a gift. She receives it with pleasure but laments the fact that she does not know how to read. After expressing her hope in the martyr's intercession ("Unless that one (fem.) who is the mistress of my life, today ..."), she unties the codex, opens it, and bends over it reverently—"as if to contemplate or perhaps to kiss it." As soon as her eyes light upon the letters, she begins to read "fluently and without hesitation, so well that the women around her were stupified." These women respond by quoting John 7:15 where the Jews are amazed at Jesus' knowledge of Scripture: "How does this woman know letters without having been taught?" Interestingly, by quoting the passage verbatim except for the switch from the male to the female demonstrative pronoun (οὗτος/αὕτη), the women effectively read a gender shift into the passage. The woman Xenarchis is put in the place of Christ (*MirTh* 45; Dagron, *Vie et miracles*, 406–9).

In the story, this audacious act of course has the desired effect of exonerating Eugenia from Melania's false accusation. However, given her explicit identification with Thecla, Eugenia's act would also have had other associations for Egyptian readers in late antiquity. According to the text, she "rent the garment which she wore *from the top as far as her girdle* ... and the chaste breasts which were upon the bosom of a pure virgin were seen."[110] (my italics) Here, the *Life of Eugenia* presents a visual tableaux that conforms remarkably to the iconography of the Thecla-ampullae. It is as if the image of Thecla stamped in clay has actually imprinted itself on the bodily posture of Eugenia! The story thus reinterprets the life of Thecla through the prism of pilgrimage iconography. In this context, the *Life of Eugenia* may be read as more than simply a repository of motifs borrowed from legendary stock. Rather, the story reflects the writer's intimate acquaintance with local pilgrimage related to Saint Thecla around the sixth century.

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The pieces of primary evidence that I have treated—the Thecla-ampullae, the story of Sophia, transvestite legends like that of Eugenia—shed light on how religious travel provided a social context for the importation of Thecla devotion into late antique Egypt. In the legends of female monastic pilgrims who "became male,"

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[109] *Life of Eugenia* 15, tr. Smith, *Selected Narratives*, 20, fol. 39a; cf. Conybeare, *Apology and Acts*, 176–77.

[110] *Life of Eugenia* 15, tr. Smith, *Selected Narratives*, 21, fol. 39b; cf. Conybeare, *Apology and Acts*, 177; *PL* 59.614D.

Thecla's life was effectively re-presented (re-narrated) in a new geographical milieu. In the story of Sophia, one recognizes Thecla's enduring association with itinerant, ascetic women. In the form of portable clay flasks bearing her image, and in the form of a local shrine, the power of Saint Thecla was made visibly and tangibly accessible to her pilgrim clientele. The ampullae, in particular, remind us that pilgrims' devotion to Thecla would have been an acutely sensory experience.[111] It was in the textured lines of these earthen vessels that Egyptian pilgrims finally came to see and touch the presence of this foreign, female saint.

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[111] On the sensory experience of pilgrims in late antiquity, see Gary Vikan, *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Washington, DC 1982), 5ff.; also Georgia A. Frank, "The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrimage to Desert Ascetics in the Christian East During the Fourth and Fifth Centuries" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1994), 70ff.

APPENDIX
A CATALOGUE OF PUBLISHED AMPULLAE WITH ST. THECLA*

1. Ampulla, fragment.
   a. Location: Alexandria, Greco-Roman Museum.
   b. Size: Dm 11.5 cm.
   c. Dating: 5th century CE (Wilpert); on the basis of iconographic and inscriptional forms.
   d. Bibliography:
      1. E.D.J. Dutilh, "Symbolisme des antiquités chrétienne,"/"Early Symbolism," *BSAA* 6 (1904):45–46/63–64; #7, Pl. 1 and 2 (misidentified as a relief of Menas).
      2. J. Wilpert, "Menasfläschen mit der Darstellung der hl. Thecla zwischen den wilden Tieren," in *Römische Quartalschrift* 20 (1906):90–91 (no image provided).

2. Ampulla, fragment.
   a. Location: Alexandria (Kôm el-Dikka), Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéene de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences et Centre Polonais d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Université de Varsovie au Caire, Inv. W 1/3720/81.
   b. Size: H 4 cm; W 4 cm.
   c. Dating: 480–560 CE (Kiss); on the basis of stratigraphic location of discovery.
   d. Bibliography:
      1. Zsolt Kiss, *Les ampoules de Saint Menas découvertes à Kôm el-Dikka (1961–1981)* (Varsovie 1989), #4; fig. 5.

3. Ampulla, fragment.
   a. Location: Alexandria (Kôm el-Dikka), Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéene de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences et Centre Polonais d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Université de Varsovie au Caire, Inv. R/1584/70.
   b. Size: H 10.5 cm; W 6.5 cm; Th 3.5 cm.
   c. Dating: 480–560 CE (Kiss); on the basis of stratigraphic location of discovery.
   d. Bibliography:
      1. Zsolt Kiss, *Les ampoules de Saint Menas découvertes à Kôm el-Dikka (1961–1981)* (Varsovie 1989), #5; fig. 6.

4. Ampulla, fragment.
   a. Location: Alexandria (Kôm el-Dikka), Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéene de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences et Centre Polonais d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Université de Varsovie au Caire, no invoice number.

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* H = Height; Dm = Diameter; W = Width; Th = Thickness

   b. Size: H 5 cm; W 3 cm.
   c. Dating: Undetermined.
   d. Bibliography:
      1. Zsolt Kiss, *Les ampoules de Saint Menas découvertes à Kôm el-Dikka (1961–1981)* (Varsovie 1989), #6; fig. 7.

5. Ampulla, fragment.
   a. Location: Berlin, Frühchristlich-byzantinische Sammlung, Nr. 1361.
   b. Size: Dm 6.5 cm.
   c. Dating: 4th–5th century CE (Wulff); no criterion provided.
   d. Bibliography:
      1. O. Wulff, *Altchristliche und mittelalterliche byzantinishche Bildwerke* I (Berlin 1909), #1361; 266 and Taf. 69.

6. Ampulla, two fragments.
   a. Location: Frankfurt am Main, Liebieghaus Museum Alter Plastik, Inv.-Nr. 2775.2.
   b. Size: H 19 cm; Dm 10 cm.
   c. Dating: 480–560 CE (Kaminski-Menssen, 41–44); on the basis of Kiss' stratigraphic findings.
   d. Bibliography:
      1. Claudia Nauerth, "Nachlese von Thekla-Darstellungen," in G. Koch, ed., *Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst und Kultur des Orients*, Göttinger Orientforschungen Reihe 2, Band 6 (Wiesbaden 1982), 14–15; Taf. 4, Abb. 1, Fc (only one of the two fragments).
      2. Gabrielle Kaminski-Menssen, *Bildwerke aus Ton, Bein und Metall*, Liebieghaus-Museum Alter Plastik, Bildwerke der Sammlung Kaufmann 3 (Kassel 1996), 55–56; Kat.-Nr. I 2, Taf. 3.

7. Ampulla, fragment.
   a. Location: Frankfurt am Main, Liebieghaus Museum Alter Plastik, Inv.-Nr. 2775.27.
   b. Size: H 13 cm; Dm 13 cm; Th 3.7 cm.
   c. Dating: 480–560 CE (Kaminski-Menssen, 41–44); on the basis of Kiss' stratigraphic findings.
   d. Bibliography:
      1. Claudia Nauerth, "Nachlese von Thekla-Darstellungen," in G. Koch, ed., *Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst und Kultur des Orients*, Göttinger Orientforschungen Reihe 2, Band 6 (Wiesbaden 1982), 14–15; Taf. 4, Abb. 1, Fb.
      2. Gabrielle Kaminski-Menssen, *Bildwerke aus Ton, Bein und Metall*, Liebieghaus-Museum Alter Plastik, Bildwerke der Sammlung Kaufmann 3 (Kassel 1996), 62; Kat.-Nr. I 27 A-B, Taf. 10.

8. Ampulla, fragment.
   a. Location: Frankfurt am Main, Liebieghaus Museum Alter Plastik, Inv.-Nr. 2775.29.
   b. Size: H 6 cm; Dm 12.5 cm; Th 4.2 cm.

   c. Dating: 480–560 CE (Kaminski-Menssen, 41–44); on the basis of Kiss' stratigraphic findings.
   d. Bibliography:
      1. Claudia Nauerth, "Nachlese von Thekla-Darstellungen," in G. Koch, ed., *Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst und Kultur des Orients*, Göttinger Orientforschungen Reihe 2, Band 6 (Wiesbaden 1982), 14–15; Taf. 4, Abb. 1, Fd.
      2. Gabrielle Kaminski-Menssen, *Bildwerke aus Ton, Bein und Metall*, Liebieghaus-Museum Alter Plastik, Bildwerke der Sammlung Kaufmann 3 (Kassel 1996), 63; Kat.-Nr. I 29 A–B, Taf. 10.

9. Ampulla, fragment.
   a. Location: Frankfurt am Main, Liebieghaus Museum Alter Plastik, Inv.-Nr. 2775.30.
   b. Size: H 9.5 cm; Dm 11 cm.
   c. Dating: 480–560 CE (Kaminski-Menssen, 41–44); on the basis of Kiss' stratigraphic findings.
   d. Bibliography:
      1. Claudia Nauerth, "Nachlese von Thekla-Darstellungen," in G. Koch, ed., *Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst und Kultur des Orients*, Göttinger Orientforschungen Reihe 2, Band 6 (Wiesbaden 1982), 14–15; Taf. 4, Abb. 1, Fe.
      2. Gabrielle Kaminski-Menssen, *Bildwerke aus Ton, Bein und Metall*, Liebieghaus-Museum Alter Plastik, Bildwerke der Sammlung Kaufmann 3 (Kassel 1996), 63; Kat.-Nr. I 30, Taf. 10.

10. Ampulla.
    a. Location: Frankfurt am Main, Liebieghaus Museum Alter Plastik, Inv.-Nr. 2775.31.
    b. Size: H 13 cm; Dm 13 cm.
    c. Dating: 480–560 CE (Kaminski-Menssen, 41–44); on the basis of Kiss' stratigraphic findings.
    d. Bibliography:
       1. Claudia Nauerth, "Nachlese von Thekla-Darstellungen," in G. Koch, ed., *Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst und Kultur des Orients*, Göttinger Orientforschungen Reihe 2, Band 6 (Wiesbaden 1982), 14–15; Taf. 4; Abb. 1, Fa.
       2. Gabrielle Kaminski-Menssen, *Bildwerke aus Ton, Bein und Metall*, Liebieghaus-Museum Alter Plastik, Bildwerke der Sammlung Kaufmann 3 (Kassel 1996), 63; Kat.-Nr. I 31, Taf. 10.

11. Ampulla.
    a. Location: London, British Museum, EA69839.
    b. Size: Dm 17.7 cm.
    c. Dating: 6th–7th century CE (Friedman); no criterion provided.
    d. Bibliography:
       1. "Recent Acquisitions," in *British Museum Society Bulletin* 54 (March 1987):27.

    2. Florence D. Friedman, *Beyond the Pharaohs: Egypt and the Copts in the 2nd to 7th Centuries AD* (Providence: RI 1989), 227, #140.

12. Ampulla.
    a. Location: London, British Museum, E.C. 882.
    b. Size: H 14 cm.
    c. Dating: Not determined.
    d. Bibliography:
        1. O.M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnographs of the British Museum* (London 1901), #882, pl. 32.
        2. Claudia Nauerth, and Rüdiger Warns, *Thekla: Ihre Bilder in der frühchristlichen Kunst* (Wiesbaden 1981), 35ff. and Abb. 16.
        3. Claudia Nauerth, "Nachlese von Thekla-Darstellungen," in G. Koch, ed., *Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst und Kultur des Orients*, Göttinger Orientforschungen Reihe 2, Band 6 (Wiesbaden 1982), Taf. 5; Abb. 2.

13. Ampulla, fragment.
    a. Location: New Haven, Yale University, Whiting Palestinian Collection, 1912.311.
    b. Size: H 8.5 cm; W 11.5 cm.
    c. Dating: 4th–5th century CE (Kleiner/Matheson); no criterion provided.
    d. Bibliography:
        1. Charles Alfred Kennedy, "The Whiting Collection of Palestinian Pottery at Yale." (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1961), 134–35, #441 (W311).
        2. Diana E.E. Kleiner and Susan B. Matheson, eds., *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (Austin 1996), 102, fig. 70.

14. Ampulla.
    a. Location: Unknown.
    b. Size: Not available.
    c. Dating: 4th–5th century CE (Kaufmann, 1910); on the basis of the dating of Wulff (#5) and Wilpert (#15).
    d. Bibliography:
        1. C.M. Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menasampullen* (Kairo 1910), 142 and fig. 85.
        2. C.M. Kaufmann, *Die heilige Stadt der Wüste* (Kempten-München 1924), 88 and Abb. 52.
        3. H. Buschhausen, "Frühchristliches Silberreliquiar aus Isaurien," in *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen-byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 11/12 (1962–63) fig. 10.
        4. A. Grabar, *Martyrium II. Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique* (London 1972), 7 and pl. 63.
        5. K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons* (Princeton 1976), Abb. 21.
        6. Claudia Nauerth, and Rüdiger Warns, *Thekla: Ihre Bilder in der frühchristlichen Kunst* (Wiesbaden 1981), 35ff. and Abb. 15.

15. Ampulla.
    a. Location: Unknown.
    b. Size: Not available.
    c. Dating: 5th century CE (Wilpert); on the basis of iconographic and inscriptional forms.
    d. Bibliography:
        1. J. Wilpert, "Menasfläschen mit der Darstellung der hl. Thecla zwischen den wilden Tieren," in *Römische Quartalschrift* 20 (1906):87.
        2. C.M. Kaufmann, *Die heilige Stadt der Wüste* (Kempten-München 1924), 100 and Abb. 62.
        3. Fernand Cabrol, and Henri Leclercq, eds., *DACL* 11, 1:386, fig. 7979.

16. Ampulla, with base.
    a. Location: Paris, Louvre, Départment des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines, MNC 1926.
    b. Size: H 27 cm; Dm 17.5 cm.
    c. Dating: 7th century CE (Weitzmann); based on stylistic considerations.
    d. Bibliography:
        1. Gustave M. Lefebvre, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Egypte* (Cairo 1907), 136, #692 (no image provided).
        2. C.M. Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menasampullen* (Kairo 1910), 141 (no image provided).
        3. Kurt Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art: Third to Seventh Century* (New York 1979), 576–578, #516.
        4. Claudia Nauerth, and Rüdiger Warns, *Thekla: Ihre Bilder in der frühchristlichen Kunst* (Wiesbaden 1981), 25–30; Abb. 10f.

VISITORS TO SHENOUTE'S MONASTERY

Heike Behlmer

I. *Introduction*

The "Monastery of Apa Shenoute"[1] is located on the west bank of the Nile, about 10 km from modern Sohag, vis-à-vis the ancient nome capital of Panopolis (Coptic: Shmin, modern Akhmim), a city known in antiquity for its textile production.[2] The monastery is situated on the edge of the irrigated land in the foothills of the western range of desert hills which borders the Nile Valley. Close to it is the ancient village of Atripe. An impressive landmark is the church, built during the famous Shenoute's tenure as abbot (385–465),[3] and important for the influence it exercised on the architecture of other church buildings in Egypt. From a small community of monks and nuns under the leadership of Shenoute's uncle Pgol, the monastery grew to be the most important religious center of the area, numbering as many as several thousand inhabitants, male and female.[4] The large monastic library of medieval parchment codices narrowly escaped destruction in early modern times.[5] Almost all extant copies of Shenoute's works, which are now our main source for his life and times, were preserved in this library.

We know from Shenoute's own writings that already during his lifetime a number of visitors came to his monastery for various purposes. Under a different guise, these visits may reappear in the Coptic and Arabic *Vita* tradition, and other tales may be added. Apart from the audience drawn from neighboring villages when Shenoute preached during the regular service in the monastery church—this did not happen every week and his sermon may well have been an extra attraction for villagers to flock to the monastery church[6]—we can distinguish several kinds of visitors: the occasional pagan philosopher or educated person, the visiting Christian dignitary and his entourage, the cleric or monk from a competing institution of the Church and the common Christian who might be looking for relief in a difficult economic situation, be in a state of emotional anguish or want to have a dispute with his neighbor settled equitably by a non-partisan agency. In the following, we shall look at the way in which these visits are described both in the works and in the *Life* of Shenoute. With Shenoute, we are in the enviable position to have an ordinary saint, whose *Life* is not only preserved in various redactions, but who has bequeathed us thousands of pages of his own writings, which may sometimes even give his view of the events narrated by his biographer. We shall argue that there are differences in presentation between the different textual genres, with the *Vita* tradition placing more emphasis on the miracles the saint performed and on his role as willing patron of the poor. We shall also examine the motivations behind the travel to the White Monastery and discuss whether Shenoute's visitors would qualify at all as "pilgrims." Finally we shall look briefly at the afterlife of the White Monastery as a destination for visitors after Shenoute's death.

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[1] The name "White Monastery," of common use today, seems to have first been mentioned in the 13th cent. by an Arabic writer and refers merely to the appearance of the monastery church, cf. Stefan Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit, Teil 2 (D–F)*, TAVO Beihefte Reihe B Nr. 41/2 (Wiesbaden 1984), 622.

[2] Klaus Peter Kuhlmann, *Materialien zur Archäologie und Geschichte des Raumes von Achmim*, DAIK Sonderschrift 11 (Mainz 1983), 5.

[3] For the date of Shenoute's death see now Stephen Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus" (Dissertation, Yale University 1993), 3–11.

[4] For the situation of the nuns under Shenoute's rule see now Susanna Elm, *"Virgins of God": The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 1994), 296–310.

[5] For the dispersal of the White Monastery library, which began in the second half of the 18th cent., see Emmel, "Corpus," 15–31.

II. *Philosophers and other pagans*

"This is the discourse our holy, prophetical father Apa Shenoute pronounced when a pagan philosopher came to him, who had come to him several times before and whose mind he knew not to be bent upon God, while many of the magistrates and rich men who were staying with us and who knew him had laughed at him, when he came to hear the sermon."[7] This discourse in its first part compares heretics and pagans to various obnoxious insects, while the Christians are assigned the part of the useful honey bee. These heretics and pagans may come to the church even frequently, prompted by the fear of public opinion,[8] but if they pray out of hypocrisy, they resemble dumb birds who spread their wings.[9] According to Emmel, Shenoute might have been prompted by the philosopher's visit to extemporize on an ecclesiological subject.[10]

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[6] Emmel, "Corpus," 877f. The monastery church did serve the surrounding population regularly, even if Shenoute was not preaching; cf. e.g. Émile Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir á l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IV^e, V^e, VI^e et VII^e siècles*, Mém. Miss. 4, 2 (Paris 1895), 647f.

[7] Johannes Leipoldt, *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia* 3, CSCO 42/Copt. 2 (Leipzig 1908; Repr. Louvain 1955), 44 = Émile Amélineau, *Œuvres de Schenoudi: Texte copte et traduction française* 1–2 (Paris 1907–1909/1911–1914), 1:335f.

Disputations with such pagan philosophers, in which the superior wisdom of the monk beats the wordly learning of his opponent, as we know them from the Lives of a Pachomius or Anthony,[11] seem to be absent from the accounts of Shenoute's life. In his works, however, in addition to his sometimes lengthy tirades against paganism there are traces of direct contact. In one of his discourses, there is reference to a disputation with a group of worshippers of pagan gods, among whom Isis is named.[12] On another occasion, a pagan *dux* comes to the monastery and addresses Shenoute with the words "I am really amazed that you are happy."[13] This mention appears in a lengthy sermon mainly concerned with the relations between pagans and Christians. Shenoute retorts sharply, "Why wouldn't they be happy who have no God but Jesus? We don't worship demonic idols, do we?"[14] Finally, there is Shenoute's archenemy Gesios,[15] who figures prominently both in his works and in his *Lives*. Although it does not become clear whether Gesios was among the monastery's visitors, he seems to have engaged Shenoute in theological discussions on several occasions. While Gesios acknowledges Jesus' power and miracles, his arguments deny the latter's divinity, on one occasion by flatly stating "Jesus is not God,"[16] on another by putting him on the same level as other "holy men" of antiquity such as Plato and Apollonius of Tyana.[17] Jesus cannot be God, because "are gods being crucified?"[18] Once Shenoute reproaches him with misusing, through lack of charity, the wealth God had granted him. Gesios retorts lightly that it had not been God, but his own father who had given him his riches.[19] On his side, Shenoute alternates between his avowed desire to convert Gesios to Christianity,[20] and violent abuse of the latter for resisting his missionary attempts and being uncharitable and cruel towards his Christian workers.[21] Shenoute was finally able to triumph over the downfall of this opponent, who seems to have died a violent death during his lifetime.[22] One wonders that in spite of Shenoute's sometimes harsh tirades and the legal proceedings in which they were involved,[23] both seem to have met frequently in person. Had the situation become so difficult for Upper Egypt's pagans, rich and independent as they might be, that they were forced to listen to the local holy man's berating and attempts at conversion? Or did Gesios seek Shenoute out—moved, as its seems, by curiosity and the search for intellectual stimulation? I would opt for a combination of both. Shenoute was both a local power not to be ignored and an interesting person to meet and to pit one's rhetorical strength against.

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[8] Leipoldt, op. cit., 48 = Amélineau, op. cit., 342.

[9] Leipoldt, op. cit., 45 = Amélineau, op. cit., 336f.

[10] Emmel, "Corpus," 884f.

[11] Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius. The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley 1985), 162–69.

[12] Amélineau, *Schenoudi* 2:408. S. also Emmel, "Corpus," 939.

[13] Excerpts of the text in Walter Ewing Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the Collection of the John Rylands Library Manchester* (Manchester 1909), 32f., no. 68.

[14] The Coptic text is not given by Crum, *Catalogue Rylands*, 33; translation quoted from Emmel, "Corpus," 932. Elsewhere, pagan army commanders are depicted as incompetent and, because of their unbelief, powerless to stop the invasion of the barbarian tribes: Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:68.

[15] The identity of this person is discussed by Heike Behlmer, "Historical Evidence from Shenoute's *De extremo iudicio*," in: *VI Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia. Atti*, vol. 2 (Torino 1993), 13f.; Heinz-Josef Thissen, "Zur Begegnung von Christentum und 'Heidentum': Schenute und Gessios," *Enchoria* 19/20 (1992/93):155–164, and Jacques van der Vliet, "Spätantikes Heidentum in Ägypten im Spiegel der koptischen Literatur," in: *Begegnung von Heidentum und Christentum im spätantiken Ägypten*, Riggisberger Berichte 1 (Riggisberg 1993), 102–109.

The communities of Upper Egypt were threatened by incursions from the pagan Beja/Blemmye tribes, and the assistance given by Shenoute's monastery to the refugees from these invasions is documented both in his own works and in the *Lives*.[24] However, members of these nomadic tribes seem to have come to the monastery for more peaceful purposes, even to listen to Shenoute's sermons.[25] At the end of a discourse on free will, Shenoute says:

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[16] Amélineau, *Schenoudi* 2:379, 1–3.5–8.

[17] See below with n. 129.

[18] Heike Behlmer, *Schenute von Atripe: De iudicio (Torino, Museo Egizio, Cat. 63000, Cod. IV)*, Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino, Serie Prima—Monumenti e Testi 8 (Torino 1996), 120 b 12–24 (text), 262 (translation). Cf. also Amélineau, *Schenoudi* 1:266,5f.9f.

[19] Behlmer, *Schenute*, 131 b 22–132 a 5 (text), 267 (translation).

[20] Ibid., 92 b 18–20 (text), 247 (translation).

[21] John W.B. Barns, "Shenute as a Historical Source," in: Jozef Wolski (ed.), *Actes du X^e Congrès International de Papyrologues. Varsovie-Cracovie 3–9 septembre 1961* (Wroclaw-Warsaw-Krakow 1964), 151–59.

[22] Émile Chassinat, *Le quatrième livre des entretiens et épîtres de Shenouti*, MIFAO 23 (Cairo 1911), 188.48–189.50. The entire sermon has been translated by David Brakke, "Shenute: On Cleaving to Profitable Things," *OLP* 20 (1989):115–141.

[23] Van der Vliet, "Spätantikes Heidentum in Ägypten," 103f.; 107f.

> If the whole flock is blessed and all the flocks of Christ, because they follow him, having realised that this is the true God—would that these comrades who stay in this place, who belong to the Blemmye and the Nuba, become united with us and follow him, that is, realize that he is God. For we have permitted them to mix with us and to enter the house of God that they would perhaps recover their senses and understand what the Psalmist has said, if they hear now, "the idols of the heathens are silver and gold" and also wood and stone and sun, moon, and stars, those which their creator fashioned that they might give light.[26]

This passage shows genuine missionary intentions on Shenoute's side and his attempts to achieve a conversion by friendliness, example and persuasion.

Thus, during Shenoute's lifetime, we encounter multi-faceted relations with pagans. While ordinary people may be driven into his church by the social pressure which must have built up in the wake of imperial legislation against the old cults, pagan army commanders are still going to war with other pagans,[27] namely the nomadic tribes threatening the frontiers of the Empire. These tribes in their turn were both feared by the population which sought refuge from their raids in the White Monastery, and themselves the object of

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[24] The documentation has been assembled by Johannes Leipoldt, "Berichte Schenutes über Einfälle der Nubier in Ägypten," *ZÄS* 40 (1902–03):126–40. The sermon starting Chassinat, *Shenouti*, 153.5 may also have been preached in the presence of a group of refugees, cf. Emmel, "Corpus," 896. Interestingly enough, some of them seem to complain about their living conditions in the monastery: Chassinat, *Shenouti*, 158.—László Török, *Late Antique Nubia. History and Archaeology of the Southern Neighbour of Egypt in the 4th–6th c. AD*, Antaeus 16 (Budapest 1988), esp. pp. 47–63 discusses the political situation of Lower Nubia in the 4th and 5th centuries. For the rise to power of the Blemmyes see also Robert T. Updegraff, "The Blemmyes I: The Rise of the Blemmyes and the Roman Withdrawal from Nubia under Diocletian (with Additional Remarks by L. Török, Budapest)," *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988):44–106.

[25] A lost work by Shenoute bears the title "An Instruction in the Presence of Barbarians," s. Emmel, "Corpus," 938.

[26] Chassinat, *Shenouti*, 83.50–84.34. See also Harold S. Jaye, "A Homily of Shenoute of Atripe on Human Will and the Devil: Translation, Commentary, and Literary Analysis" (Dissertation, Brandeis University, 1980), 37; 77f.

[27] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:68.4–9. Shenoute ascribes their apparent failure to their unbelief.

Shenoute's missionary purposes. The pagan *dux*' visit shows the same curiosity and slightly amused wonder as the much earlier philosopher who arrived at a new Pachomian foundation in Panopolis/Akhmim and teased the monks, "have you ever heard that one brings olives to the city of Panopolis to sell them there?"[28] The coals that the Pachomian monks are carrying to Newcastle is the merchandise of wisdom, already abundantly available in the city. The philosopher is aware of the common background he shares with the monks, and makes use of it in his ironical statement. In the same manner, the pagan *dux* treated his monastic counterpart as an equal, even if he does not understand Shenoute's strange way of life.

III. *Visiting Christian dignitaries*

The number and high rank of the government officials Shenoute reports to have been intimate with is quite astonishing, even if already his predecessor Pgol had entertained the urban magistrates of the city of Panopolis/Akhmim and preached to them.[29] Once, when he seems to give in to the temptation of name-dropping, he cites not less than six holders of the highest offices to underscore his point.[30] Most of the persons whose name and title is given here are only known from Shenoute's works,[31] such as the *augustalis* Aelianus, the *hegemon* Dioscurides, the *hegemon* Heraklammon, and Spudasius, the *comes* of the empress. This is the case for most other officials as well. Some are only mentioned briefly in an acephalous work, two pages of which have been edited by Leipoldt under the title "De sapientia magistratuum."[32] It is concerned with the refutation of false teachings which are about in Middle Egypt. One example is given in the published fragment: the son of the *stratelates* is reported to have said "this body will not rise," but had to retract quickly when Shenoute reproached him. Here we find a number of other high officials,[33] namely the *hegemon* Alexander, the *hegemon* Petrus, the *comes* Aedesius and a *tribunus*, who remains unidentified by name.

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[28] Louis-Théophile Lefort, *S. Pachomii vita bohairice scripta*, CSCO 89/Copt. 7 (Louvain 1953), 52f., discussed by Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 163–65 and Van der Vliet, "Spätantikes Heidentum in Ägypten," 122f.

[29] *Vita boh.* § 5: Johannes Leipoldt and Walter E. Crum, *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia* 1, CSCO 41/Copt. 1 (Leipzig 1906), 9f. *Vita arab.*: Émile Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IV^e et V^e siècles*, Mém. Miss. 4,1 (Paris 1888), 307.

[30] Amélineau, *Schenoudi* 1:420f.

[31] See the following entries in J.R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 2: AD 395–527 (Cambridge 1980): AELIANVS 2 (p. 14); DIOSCVRIDES (p. 368); HERACLAMMON 1 (pp. 538f.); SPVDASIVS (p. 1027), where Johannes Leipoldt, *Schenute von Atripe und die Entstehung des national Ägyptischen Christentums*, TU 25,1 (Leipzig 1903), is given as the only source for these officials.

[32] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:32f. The attribution to Shenoute is supported by Emmel's research, cf. Emmel, "Corpus," 1011.

Only a couple are known from sources other than Shenoute's works: Andreas, who appears as *comes* in the Thebaid during Nestorius' exile in Egypt[34] or Theodotus, *comes Aegypti*, mentioned Cod. Theod. VI,28,8 (435 Jan. 29) as recipient of a copy of the edict.[35] The *comes* Caesarius, who visited together with the *hegemon* Taurinus, may have been identical with Caesarius, son of Candidianus, the patron of the monastery.[36]

The officials named include thus provincial governors, designated by the Greek *hegemon* (= lat. *praeses*),[37] mostly governors of the (Lower) Thebaid, and several *comites*, a title traditionally translated as "count." This title is born not only by the military commander of Lower Egypt, the *comes (limitis) Aegypti*, but also, from the reign of Theodosius II onward, by the *comes et dux limitis Thebaici*, who united in his person the governorship of the Upper Thebaid and the military command of the whole of Upper Egypt.[38] One *praefectus augustalis*, the official who after the creation of the diocese Egypt (~ 371) resided in Alexandria is mentioned, but he is reported to have risen to this post from his former office of *hegemon* (provincial governor).[39] One *comes* of the Empress and one *tribunus* complete the picture.[40] For easier reference their names and titles are listed in an Appendix.

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[33] Martindale, *Prosopography* 2: AEDESIVS 5 (p. 11); ALEXANDER 8 (p. 56); PETRVS 6 (p. 865; no sources other than Shenoute for any of these men are given).

[34] Ibid., 87, s.v. ANDREAS 2.

[35] Ibid., 1103f., s.v. THEODOTVS 4. Cf. Roger Rémondon, "Le P. Vindob. inv. 25838 et les commandants militaires en Egypte au IV^e^ siècle et au V^e^," *CdE* 40 (1965):190 and 194f. for his tenure.

[36] Martindale, *Prosopography* 2: CAESARIVS 2 (p. 249); TAVRINVS 1 (p. 1056). For Caesarius see also Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten* 2:608.

[37] Hugh J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions: a Lexicon and Analysis*, ASP 13 (Toronto 1974), 148f.

[38] For a brief explanation of the use of these terms in Shenoutean Coptic see Jürgen Horn, *Studien zu den Märtyrern des nördlichen Oberägypten I: Märtyrerverehrung und Märtyrerlegenden im Werk des Schenute. Beiträge zur ältesten ägyptischen Märtyrerüberlieferung*, GOF IV/15 (Wiesbaden 1986), 17, especially note 100 and J. Hahn, "Hoher Besuch im Weissen Kloster. Flavianus, Praeses Thebaidos, bei Schenute von Atripe," *ZPE* 87 (1991):250. Jürgen Horn, "Untersuchungen zu Frömmigkeit und Literatur des christlichen Ägypten: Das Martyrium des Viktor, Sohnes des Romanos," (Dissertation, University of Göttingen, 1988), 22f., convincingly shows that in the later Coptic martyr legends, the distinction between *comes*, *dux* and *hegemon* has become blurred: a "comes," e.g., has become a Roman official of the highest rank, whose exact position and function in the hierarchy of the imperial government is left in the dark. If though, as it seems, Shenoute was quite aware of the rank of his visitors, this could have consequences for the dating of their visits. Theodosius e.g. (s. the

These dignitaries would come to Shenoute to discuss questions of the interpretation of scripture and of general moral conduct.[41] Some of them would also have come quite often, such as Caesarius, who is said to have arrived "as he was wont to do"[42] or else Alexander and Petrus, with whom Shenoute "spoke many times."[43] Caesarius and Taurinus arrived together with their full entourage expressly to discuss some problems arisen in the Alexandrian church. Chossoroas the *comes*[44] appears once together with the *comes* Jovinus,[45] once alone, and puts before Shenoute two problems which prompt him to deliver two sermons on the eucharistic fast and free will respectively.

The first sermon is introduced by Chossoroas' comment "there is something (done) in Egypt which is not good, i.e. that people eat before partaking of the Eucharist."[46] In the second case, he com-

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Appendix), who is addressed as *comes* and *dux* and referred to as *hegemon*, should then be dated after 425.

[39] Aelianus: s. Amélineau, *Schenoudi* 1:420.

[40] See the Appendix for a full list of instances in Shenoute's works where specific government officials are mentioned.

[41] On a different note, we cannot yet grasp, in Shenoute's times, the medieval role of the nunnery as honorable alternative to marriage for the daughters of the upper class. During his successor Besa's tenure however, there is the case of the nun Aphthonia (Karl Heinz Kuhn, *Letters and Sermons of Besa*, CSCO 157/Copt. 21 [Louvain 1956], 37–39). She is the daughter of one Alexander, a *comes* (Martindale, *Prosopography* 2: ALEXANDER 10 [p. 56]), and is reported by Besa to have complained to her father and mother about the way she was being treated. According to Besa's version of the facts Aphthonia, when reproached for a minor offense, in her turn said that she would leave for another convent.

[42] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:30.

[43] Ibid., 32.

[44] Martindale, *Prosopography* 2: CHOSROES (p. 293).

[45] Martindale, *Prosopography* 2: IOVINVS 4 (p. 622). Shenoute reports that Jovinus had written to him, warning him that a barbarian invasion was impending and suggesting that the community abandon the monastery: Emmel, "Corpus," 860f. The text is part of a codex to be published by A. Boud'hors. Shenoute's *Canons* 8, to which it belongs, have been dated by Emmel to some time between 431 and 444, cf. Emmel, ibid., 797f.

[46] Chassinat, *Shenouti*, 50.43–50. According to Pierre Du Bourguet, "Entretien de Chenouté sur des problèmes de discipline ecclésiastique et de cosmologie," *BIFAO* 57 (1958):124 this remark would mean that Chossoroas compares this custom to what he has seen elsewhere and that he may not be often in the country.

ments referring to a sermon Shenoute had just finished delivering, "The devil hinders us and trips us up and does not let us do this (i.e. observe God's commandments and laws), and he seizes us in those [works] which are his."[47] Chossoroas does not ask deferentially, he makes statements, even if he is said to have eventually accepted Shenoute's superior interpretation of the Scriptures. It thus becomes quite clear that these officials are conscious of their own status and general culture. All the while Chossoroas appreciates the work of the ascetic and his spiritual qualities. "You have made the desert a city," he sums up his judgment in an unpublished fragment.[48] On his side, Shenoute will praise all those officials who measure up to his standards of Christian conduct, both to their faces and through holding them up as examples for others in his sermons. Especially the local governors Dioscurides, Flavianus and Heraclammon are commended for their virtues, namely temperance, impartiality and almsgiving.

Generally, the officials of the Roman government seem to have met Shenoute as intellectual equals and, diplomats that they were expected to be, dealt with him and his monastery as an influential secular power in the area. Different political agendas do surface occasionally, though, especially in one possible source of conflict: Shenoute's anti-pagan activities, which might offend pagan notables of some influence still or cause popular unrest, did not find a unanimously positive echo among government officials. In one case he had stolen books—"removed" from the house of an "impious man," as he put it—, from the house of a pagan.[49] The Christian *comes* Chrysippus,[50] who had come to the monastery earlier for a visit together with his children and retinue,[51] refused to prosecute. The background of two other cases is somewhat obscure. In the first Shenoute allegedly gave asylum to three thieves,[52] the second is a case of unrest in Panopolis. The two officials in charge of the investigation, the *praeses* Dorotheus and the *comes* and *dux* Theodosius, write for explanation, Dorotheus quite friendly and respectfully, Theodosius in a rather sharp tone.[53] Dorotheus is certainly a Christian, though for Theodosius there may be indications that point to the contrary.[54]

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[47] Chassinat, *Shenouti*, 62.51–63.1, cf. Jaye, "Homily of Shenoute," 21 (translation); 40f. (commentary).

[48] Quoted after Emmel, "Corpus," 933.

[49] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:31f.

[50] Martindale, *Prosopography* 2: CHRVSIPPVS (p. 297; no sources other than Shenoute).

[51] Chrysippus' visit is mentioned together with that of the *hegemon* Marcellinus, but it does not become clear, whether both had come together or on different occasions. For Marcellinus see Martindale, *Prosopography* 2: MARCELLINVS 3 (p. 708; no sources other than Shenoute).

[52] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:23.

To sum up: from Shenoute's own works one obtains the impression of a secular aristocracy disposed to travel much and in style,[55] accompanied by their families, clerks and servants. Even if we take into consideration the long time span covered by Shenoute's active career and the fact that he is more likely to have given these visits a prominent place in his works because of the status of his visitors, the sheer number of important men on the move seems high. They would come freely to the local holy man—most of them seem to have been governors or military commanders of the Thebaid—and discuss theological questions among equals, despite the occasional political conflict. Even the pagan *dux* mentioned in the previous section addresses Shenoute in a relaxed manner, if we can judge from the edited fragment.

The hagiographical intent of the *Life* makes these visits appear in quite a different light. Here the *dux* or the governor come to the White Monastery as petitioners to solicit Shenoute's blessing in their war against barbarian tribes[56] and to beg for a charm or token, here a wooden cross made by Shenoute's own hands[57] or the abbot's girdle, to be worn for luck and protection.

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[53] Theodosius' actual letter has not been preserved, we can only judge from quotations from it in Shenoute's answer, ibid., 25.

[54] Hahn, "Hoher Besuch im Weissen Kloster," 251 n. 18. Both Dorotheus and Theodosius are listed in the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* as known from exclusively Shenoutean sources, cf. Martindale, *Prosopography* 2: DOROTHEVS 6 (p. 377); THEODOSIVS 10 (p. 1101). In the Arabic *Life*, Shenoute is even brought before a governor on charges of murder and saved miraculously by two angels when about to be beheaded: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 391f.

[55] The "wider horizons" of the Egyptian notables of the 4th and 5th centuries have been commented on in the context of the "wandering poets," many of whom originated from Upper Egypt, cf. Roger Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993), 108f.

[56] *Vita boh.* §§ 103–108 (*dux*) and 135–137 (governor): Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:50–52; 60f. In the Bohairic *Life*, the *dux* threatens Besa with living off the monastery with his army until Shenoute himself, who has retired to the desert, is called back (in the Arabic the threat is much less explicit: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 410f.).

[57] Thus in the Sahidic version of the *dux*' visit: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 642f. Here, the name of the *dux* is given as Heraclius. The Bohairic mentions a girdle in both cases. In the Arabic version the girdle is mentioned only in the first case (Amélineau,

The visit of these government officials also left a trace in the eyes of posterity. In one of the White Monastery codices, which the colophon dates to the tenth century, four of Shenoute's discourses are grouped together by a general heading at the beginning of the first of these works "Discourses in the presence of some dignitaries who came to him with their retinues."[58] The same codex assigns headings to the following three discourses which refer exclusively to the presence of the officials (Jovinus, Chossoroas, Flavianus and Heraklammon, all mentioned with their respective titles) in the audience.

A liturgical *typikon* from the White Monastery, a list of lections for church services from the tenth century,[59] preserves the importance assigned to these visitors in a curious way. Five hundred years after Shenoute's death and three hundred years after the end of Byzantine rule in Egypt, the liturgical direction reads "the day the *dux* comes to visit us ...," or "if governors (*hegemon*) or urban magistrates (*archon*) have come to us ..."

IV. *Visiting clergy and monks*

An ambiguous relationship existed between Shenoute and the official church hierarchy. As we can glimpse from his works and *Lives*, he entertained good relations with the see of Alexandria, and many local clerics. A numerous public consisting, without further differentiation, of clerics, priests, deacons, heads of monasteries, and monks, is mentioned in the title of one sermon as having come to "see him and to hear from him words of God."[60] All the while Shenoute did not seek after ecclesiastical office for himself and was concerned that others should do so, even throwing their wealth into the balance to secure their promotion. This concern prompted his sometimes sharp accusations against simony among the clergy.

Monuments, 410–412); in occasion of the governor's visit (ibid., 439), only Shenoute's blessing is requested.

[58] Emmel, "Corpus," 904.

[59] Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Ms. Insinger no. 34 p. 95 l. 8–p. 98 l. 22 (W. Pleyte and P.A.A. Boeser, *Manuscrits coptes du Musée d'Antiquités des Pays-Bas à Leide* [Leiden 1897], 157–162): "On dignitaries who have come to us ...". The other dignitaries include rich men, heads of monastic communities and priest who have come either in the company of the latter or by themselves. I owe this reference to the kindness of J. Horn who suggested the date for the manuscript. On the value of the liturgical *typika* for the reconstruction of Shenoute's literary corpus see Emmel, "Corpus," 738–756.

[60] Amélineau, *Schenoudi* 2:44.

Shenoute addresses the problem of simony in particular in two different speeches: in a fragment of a sermon which reports on his remarks in the presence of the *hegemon* Heraklammon,[61] he draws a comparison between public and ecclesiastical office. His audience seems to consist of government officials and their entourage whom he is admonishing to use their power, influence and wealth wisely. At a certain point, Shenoute thinks it useful to tell—against his will, as he assures us—how one day many bishops, clerics, magistrates, soldiers and their following had come to him with a letter from the archbishop Cyril asking him to come to Alexandria and accept the episcopal office. He continues: "I did not go, because I wanted the name of God to be exalted in this, because I saw many running like crazy with all their possessions in order to obtain the title and not in order to do the works." The archbishop does not seem to have been angry at this refusal.

In the second work, a lengthy acephalous sermon entitled by its first editor Francesco Rossi "On the Necessity of Death and the Last Judgment,"[62] two passages are directly concerned with the problem of simony. Again, Shenoute draws a comparison between administrative and ecclesiastical office, between the hierarchy of the Byzantine state and the church.

Shenoute senses that the problem of simony is connected to the growing wealth of the church and that the office would give its holder the possibility of enriching himself after he had bought it.

> Maybe this is what they think (persons buying offices): if we obtain an office for money and not because of our purity and justice, we will be able to get back [our investment] manifold from others ... if they on their side teach those to give who want to obtain the holy title from them for payment, in the same way as those who obtain the office of provincial governor in a fraudulent manner, hoping to collect what they have spent many times over from many people.[63]

As in the case of the secular administration, Shenoute sees a chain of corruption. Men bid for higher offices in the hope of recuperating their expenses, for they turn and sell to others those offices of which they are able to dispose.

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[61] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:33–37, published this fragment under the title "De modestia clericorum et magistratuum." It is part of a longer sermon with the incipit "Blessed are those who observe justice," to be dated after 431; cf. Emmel, "Corpus," 894 and 907f. The complete text has been translated by M.E. Foat, "Shenute: Discourse in the Presence of Eraklammon," *OLP* 24 (1993):113–131.

[62] For the history of this manuscript see Emmel, "Corpus," 555f. and Behlmer, *Schenute*, XI–XV.

[63] Behlmer, *Schenute*, 52b–53a (text), 228 (translation).

In the sermon on the Last Judgment, Shenoute thinks it necessary to stress the fact that he does not have a general prejudice against ecclesiastical offices, but that his only concern is the condemnation of corrupt clerics.[64] Could this be an accusation that some opponent had brought up against him?

This leads us to asking what is behind an anecdote from his *Life*.[65] Shenoute refuses to see the bishop of nearby Panopolis because he is at that moment in deep conversation with Jesus who had come to visit him in person. Shenoute responds neither to the bishop's repeated—friendly—entreaties to receive him nor to his angry threat to excommunicate him if he does not see him at once. Only when Jesus reminds him that an excommunicated person cannot enter heaven because of the covenant he has made with Peter (cf. Matthew 16:19), Shenoute convinces himself to receive the bishop.[66]

Why Besa wants to preserve this story, is open to discussion. The fact that Shenoute has to give in in a power struggle with ecclesiastical authorities does not shed a flattering light on the great abbot. Maybe the author of the *Life* was interested only in presenting still another personal encounter of his hero with Jesus, the saints or the prophets, with which the *Life* fairly abounds. Maybe, though, it was no longer part of Besa's perspective to assert the traditional independence of the ascetic from the institutionalized church.[67] After all, the time was not far away from which on the bishops of the Egyptian church were recruited exclusively from the ranks of the monks.

The motivation behind the bishop's visit to our abbot is also of interest. According to the Life, the bishop is on his way to Alexandria to wait upon the archbishop Cyril and seems to wish to discuss the purpose of his trip with Shenoute, in other words, he tries to find a common ground in church policy with the other religious authority in his area.

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[64] Ibid., 108a–b (text), 256 (translation).

[65] *Vita boh.* §§ 70–72: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:35f.; *Vita arab.*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 374–376. The beginning of this episode is preserved in Sahidic as well: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 638f.

[66] As further inducement for Shenoute to receive the bishop the Arabic *Life* adds the prophecy made by Jesus himself that the bishop would die three days hence anyway: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 374f.

[67] The archbishop Athanasius tries to bring the rising ascetic movement under his control, most notoriously by means of his "Life of Anthony," in which the famous hermit is presented as a model of the anchoritic lifestyle in the service of the church, cf. in particular David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford 1995), 201–265.

Another religious dignitary, who is mentioned twice in the *Life* as coming to the White Monastery "to pay his respects" to Shenoute, is Apa Martyrius, archimandrite of the Pachomian foundation of Pbow.[68] The *Life* not only underlines the good relations with the Pachomians,[69] it also reports monks to have come from afar, attracted by his reputation. Some elders from Shiet are said to have come once to receive his blessing and to ask him whether there would be another monk in their generation like the blessed Anthony.[70] Again, the *Life*'s hagiographical intent shifts the emphasis to Shenoute's renown, which spreads both to competing monastic institutions in the vicinity and to distant corners of Egypt (and even to the Imperial Court).[71]

V. *Common people: in quest of a patron*

We have mentioned earlier that many laymen came to the monastery when Shenoute preached. In his sermons, he not only addressed his public, but sometimes he took even pains to accommodate their needs and wishes. "I will cut my sermon short and stop, for I see that you want to be going," he says on one occasion.[72] One sermon even bears the title "a short sermon ... on a holiday, when the multitude wanted to go home quickly."[73] Many visitors among the commoners came to their holy men for more than spiritual edification. In fact, there seems to have been a regular charitable distribution of bread to the poor in conjunction with the Saturday service.[74] Among a mixed group of visitors, clerics, monks, and laymen, there were some who had travelled expressly to have their disputes—which included thefts—settled. They may have left the sermon slightly disappointed, because Shenoute did not accommodate their request but instead seized the opportunity to deliver two general sermons on sin.[75]

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[68] *Vita boh.* §§ 74f.; 93: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:37f.; 45f.

[69] In the Arabic *Life*, it is not only Martyrius of Pbow, but Victor of Tabennese (who attended the council of Ephesus together with the archbishop Cyril of Alexandria and Shenoute) as well, who visits the White Monastery. In this occasion his companion is cured of the gout through kissing Shenoute's feet; cf. Amélineau, *Monuments*, 334f.; 431.

[70] *Vita sah.*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 638; *Vita boh.* §§ 68f.: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:35; *Vita arab.*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 372–374. The Arabic *Life* adds another question that the visiting monks put before Shenoute: whether with all the living beings drinking from it, the water of the Nile would ever become less.

[71] *Vita boh.* §§ 53–67 = Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:29–35.

[72] Chassinat, *Shenouti*, 125.10–15, quoted after Emmel, "Corpus," 877.

[73] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:111.5–7.

[74] In the Sahidic *Life*, this distribution is mentioned in a very matter-of-fact

Contrary to Shenoute, his successor Besa seems to have accepted the office of mediator with good grace. In a letter to the "people in the villages"[76] he tries to settle a dispute which seems to have led or might lead to bloodshed. Whether or not his offices have been solicited by any of the parties does not become clear from the fragmentary text.

The *Lives* of Shenoute give a whole bundle of reasons which motivated the common Christian to visit the monastery. These include the wish to bring a gift,[77] to obtain a blessing or the search for alleviation of some mental anguish, as in the case of a robber who had murdered for gain and sought the path to forgiveness of his sins.[78] Practical advice and help in a difficult life situation are also requested. During a famine, the inhabitants of the nomes of Shmin/Akhmim and Psoi[79] are said to have flocked to the White Monastery,[80] and poor men seek relief from oppressive tax collectors and landlords.[81] The *Lives* emphasize both Shenoute's role as patron to the area and the miraculous way in which he grants his aid. This does not mean that his works portray the monastery as an altogether unwilling benefactor to the poor; the aid given to the refugees from the Blemmye invasions mentioned above is referred to several times by Shenoute

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manner: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 647f. The same holds true for the pseudo-autobiographical text discussed below with n. 82. Cf. also the Arabic *Life*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 432f.

[75] Amélineau, *Schenoudi* 2:44–79. For the contents and codicological position of these texts s. Emmel, "Corpus," 913f.

[76] Kuhn, *Besa*, 129f.

[77] *Vita boh.* §§ 33–35: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:22f.

[78] Ibid. §§ 14–16: Leipoldt and Crum, ibid., 14f. Similarly the Arabic *Life*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 322–24.

[79] Psoi is the Coptic name of Ptolemais Hermiou, a short distance upstream from Akhmim.

[80] *Vita boh.* §§ 27f.: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:20; *Vita arab.*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 351f.; similarly the pseudo-autobiographical text discussed below with n. 82: Heike Behlmer and Anthony Alcock, *A Piece of Shenoutiana from the Department of Egyptian Antiquities* (*EA 71005*), British Museum Occasional Paper 119 (London 1996), 6–8 (text), 15f. (translation).

[81] *Vita boh.* § 85f.: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:41f.; Behlmer and Alcock, *Shenoutiana*, 9–12 (text), 17f. (translation).

himself and numerous passages in his sermons are aimed at the rich, who are encouraged to charity and warned about the dangers hard-heartedness would bring to the soul. However, the *Lives* are much more preoccupied with these two aspects, neglecting the spiritual and general moral concern Shenoute's discourses and rules focus on.

In a curious, pseudo-autobiographical piece of the Shenoutean tradition, the roles of patron and wonderworker are combined in an extremely concentrated narration. On only fourteen pages, six different episodes are narrated, among which two bread/grain multiplication miracles.[82] Two other episodes concern Shenoute's help to the poor and oppressed, where in one a steward is miraculously enabled to repay a debt for which he is pursued by his master, and in the other a merciless rich man dies and is resuscitated by Shenoute, after which he gives all his belongings to the poor and becomes a monk. In both, Shenoute is portrayed as filling the role of patron quite willingly and naturally.

In another episode, a mixture of reverence, curiosity and pride in the local holy man can be sensed in a group of visitors.[83] These men are crossing the river on the ferry that the visitors to the White Monastery habitually use, when one man suggests, on the spur of the moment, it seems, that they "visit the man of God." Another man says somewhat deprecatingly "If he is the man of God for you, he is not at all the man of God for me." In a similar episode in Besa's *Life of Shenoute*,[84] it is the secretary of the Pachomian leader Apa Martyrius of Pbow who disparages Shenoute's qualities. When Apa Martyrius wants to pay his respects to "my father the prophet," as he calls Shenoute, the secretary rejoins "What prophet? Let us go, for truly that fellow does not know what he has eaten at night." These episodes lead us to another slight shift in our perspective. How was the "man of God's" reputation made and prestige preserved?

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[82] The text has been edited by Behlmer and Alcock, *Shenoutiana*. The connection of these miracles with episodes in the *Lives* is discussed ibid., 16 n. 59.

[83] Ibid., esp. pp. 8f. (text) and 16f. (translation of this episode).

[84] *Vita boh.* § 74f.: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:37f.; *Vita arab.*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 378–380. The fragmentary Sahidic version is slightly different: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 635.

VI. *Acquisition of prestige: Lives vs. works*

The "holy man" of Late Antiquity acquired the prestige which made him the object of so many visits, in various ways. Clairvoyance, the "gift to search hearts,"[85] was one of them. In both of the last-mentioned cases, he puts the slanderer into place by using this particular gift. The rich man is confronted with his own actions on his way to the monastery, the secretary with his own words. The instances for displaying this miraculous quality are multiplied in the *Lives.* A visitor who brings a votive offering wants to put the abbot's charitable qualities to the test and pretends to be a poor man in need of alms. Shenoute tells him the purpose of his visit straightaway.[86] A man who has come from afar to obtain his blessing is found to have committed a murder.[87] A rich man's house in the city of Akhmim has been robbed: Shenoute discovers the thieves, but when the man proves himself ungrateful, he loses everything again.[88] The gift includes the ability not only to read the minds of his interlocutors or to tell them their past deeds, but also to predict the future. When on a holiday clerics come to visit and make unreasonable demands for food, Shenoute orders that their wishes be satisfied, knowing that they would not gain eternal life[89] (in the Arabic *Life*: live to come a second time).[90]

The Lives of the saints present the holy person as a human whose detachedness from the cares of this world made him an ideal mediator in neighborhood quarrels. The dangers which could threaten the life of the common man, hunger and thirst, the fear of corporal punishment, the worry caused by the obligations of a family, could not touch him. Thus he gained παρρησία, freedom of speech, with the powerful and could intercede for the poor, the oppressed and the prisoners.[91] The effectiveness of his prayer and the cures worked through his intercession were highly valued commodities for the local community.[92] We have looked at enough examples from Shenoute's *Life* to see that he was presented as all of this, in particular as a willing dispenser of blessings. In the words of Peter Brown, a "seemingly effortless, 'gravity-free' flow of divine favours ... stemmed from his person."[93]

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[85] Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge and London 1978), 96.

[86] *Vita boh.* §§ 33–35: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:22f.; *Vita arab.*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 355f.

[87] *Vita boh.* §§ 36–41: Leipoldt and Crum, ibid., 1:23–25; *Vita arab.*: Amélineau, ibid., 356–358.

[88] *Vita boh.* §§ 42–52: Leipoldt and Crum, ibid., 1:25–29; *Vita arab.*: Amélineau, ibid., 358–361.

[89] *Vita boh.* § 87: Leipoldt and Crum, ibid., 1:42f.

[90] Amélineau, *Monuments*, 395f.

[91] According to the *Life*, even the nomadic chiefs respected their intercession, even if they had to be convinced by a miracle: *Vita boh.* § 89f.: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:43f.

We have seen though that Shenoute refused the office of mediator in a dispute and instead exhorted his audience to repentance. In his sermons and letters, Shenoute exhorts and preaches, all the while underlining man's free will and his ability to know right from wrong and to combat Satan. Here the living Shenoute seems quite different from the image of the dead saint, projected in various ways by the *Lives*, who willingly performs many miracles and walks in the company of angels, prophets and the Lord himself. This emphasis on the miraculous opposes the *Lives* clearly to the testimony of the works which stress faith, charity, and ascetic conduct. Miracles are not necessary to silence the opponent. Many times an able rejoinder or a sharp reprimand would have sufficed, as in the case of the son of a *stratelates*, who had come to the city (Panopolis) and is reported have said "this body will not rise." When he came to attend the service in the White Monastery he was merely reproached by Shenoute and did not repeat his statement.[94] At other times, Shenoute turned to action, as is well known. He mentions himself how he and his supporters raided pagan houses or burned local temples. The *Lives* add miraculous touches to the same stories: the abbot's donkey discovers magical potions buried in the ground, or, the pagan's doors open by themselves to give Shenoute's party access to his cult images.[95]

The shifting emphasis from the moral to the miraculous may be viewed in the perspective of some general lines along which Late Antique Christianity developed. As Rowan Greer put it, "Power became more significant than virtue; and the miracles of the saints, dead and living, tended to eclipse an emphasis upon the right of human freedom in choosing the good."[96] Power, at this point in the evolution of the Christian community, does mean both spiritual and secular power, if one wants to apply this modern distinction at all.

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[92] Thus Robert Browning, "The 'Low Level' Saint's Life in the Early Byzantine World," in: Sergei Hackel (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint. University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, Studies Supplementary to Sobornost 5 (1981): 117–127 sums up the qualities, which according to his *Life* propel the ordinary saint on his path to sanctity.

[93] Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred. Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge 1995), 63.

[94] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:32.27–33.5.

[95] *Vita boh.* §§ 83f.; 125: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:41, 57.

High government officials found in Shenoute not only an intellectual peer, but an example their entangledness with this world could not hope to imitate. This is a possible implication of the *comes* Chossoroas' words, which prompt Shenoute to give his discourse on free will, "The devil hinders us and trips us up and does not let us do this (i.e. observe God's commandments and laws), and he seizes us in those [works] which are his."[97] The same sentiment is expressed by other officials and repeated in the title of a discourse held in their presence: "A brief instruction in the presence of Caesarius and his *scholastici* and his staff and some urban magistrates, when they said, as we sat in a house in the monastery, 'We desire the works of God, but our weakness keeps us back.' "[98]

At the same time Shenoute was entitled to respect as leader of one of the most important economic institutions of the region. Even if the figures of a workforce of 4000 monks and nuns under his command are exaggerated, the number of provisions distributed to the refugees and the money spent on their care show the financial strength of the place. Both the secular powers and competing Church institutions seem well advised to have kept this in mind.

VII. *Visitors or Pilgrims?*

A question which we have neglected up to this stage in the discussion is the proper identification of any of Shenoute's visitors as pilgrims. One scholar who has devoted his attention to the question in how far the visits to the holy men of Egypt are proper "pilgrimages" is Bernhard Kötting. In his fundamental 1950 study on pilgrimage in Antiquity and the Early Church, he wants to draw a distinction between the visits to the stylite saints of Syria, which he sees as proper pilgrimages, and the visits to the monks of Egypt, motivated by an interest in the visitor's religious and ascetic self-formation.[99]

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[96] Rowan A. Greer, *The Fear of Freedom. A Study of Miracles in the Roman Imperial Church* (University Park PA and London 1989), 6.

[97] See above with n. 47.

[98] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:26.25–27.4.

[99] Bernhard Kötting, *Peregrinatio religiosa. Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche*, Forschungen zur Volkskunde 33/34/35 (Münster 1950), 188, 302.

In a recent study, he does not insist upon this clear distinction between Syria and Egypt, but continues to consider the motivation of the visitor a main guideline towards a classification of his visit.[100] Elsewhere the visits to the holy men have been seen in the broader context of the evolution of Jerusalem pilgrimages[101] or of the martyr cults.[102]

Whether we can call any of the visitors to the White Monastery "pilgrim" seems largely a matter of definition and focus. If we define "pilgrimage as travel to a site which is known as a point of connection between the spiritual world and those in this physical space,"[103] many of the visits to the White Monastery are indeed pilgrimages. Even the pagan official or philosopher who would never see himself or be considered by others a "pilgrim" is nevertheless acknowledging the power, religious and secular, of Shenoute's personality. If we restrict the purpose of the travel to "a journey undertaken by a person in quest of a place or a state that he or she believes to embody a valued ideal"[104] or, narrowing the scope even more, to paying "religious homage to a recognized holy being and through that religious activity to pay homage to or request special favor from God,"[105] most or in the second case, a considerable number, of the visitors would still qualify as pilgrims.

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[100] Bernhard Kötting, "Wallfahrt zu lebenden Personen im Altertum," in: Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck and Gerda Möhler (eds.), *Wallfahrt kennt keine Grenzen. Themen zu einer Ausstellung des Bayerischen Nationalmuseums und des Adalbert Stifter Vereins, München* (München and Zürich 1984), 231.

[101] Simon Coleman and John Elsner, *Pilgrimage Past and Present. Sacred Travel and Sacred Space in the World Religions* (London 1995), 89–91.

[102] Patrick Geary, "The Saint and the Shrine. The Pilgrims' Goal in the Middle Ages," in: Kriss-Rettenbeck and Möhler (eds.), *Wallfahrt*, 265–273. Paul M. Bassett, "Pilgrimage," in: Everett Ferguson (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York & London 1990), 734f. focuses exclusively on Jerusalem pilgrimages. Speaking of the Roman noblewoman Paula's voyage to the East in 385/386, Pierre Maraval simply states that her travel from the holy places of Palestine on to Egypt to see the monks, should be called similar to a pilgrimage: "Les pèlerinages des occidentaux dans l'orient chrétien du IV^{e} au VII^{e} siècle," in: *Voyages et voyageurs au Proche-orient ancien: Actes du colloque de Cartigny 1988*, Les Cahiers du CEPOA 6 (Louvain 1994), 139.

[103] Linda Davidson and Maryjane Dunn-Wood, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages: A Research Guide*, Garland Medieval Bibliographies 16 (New York and London 1993), 24. Pilgrimage in this broad sense is also at the base of Swinarski's study on the worship of saints and travel to holy places by medieval rulers, cf. Ursula Swinarski, *Herrschen mit den Heiligen. Kirchenbesuche, Pilgerfahrten und Heiligenverehrung früh- und hochmittelalterlicher Herrscher (ca. 500–1200)*, Geist und Werk der Zeiten 78 (Bern 1991), 13 n. 1.

[104] Alan Morinis, "Introduction," in: A. Morinis (ed.), *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, Contributions to the Study of Anthropology 7 (Westport, CT and London 1992), 4.

[105] Davidson and Dunn-Wood, *Pilgrimage*, 13.

This holds especially true for the visits of the government officials. The similarity of the movements of the secular aristocracy in the fourth and fifth centuries to early Christian pilgrimages has been noted and their travels may have constituted, together with the movements of the imperial household, the *comitatus*, as a possible antecedent for travelling by pilgrims.[106] In the Middle Ages the aristocracy was considered particularly vulnerable to temptation because their social responsibilities forced them "to live in the world" more and to incur greater sins. And not only have the Christian elites been observed to travel more in general, but also to go on pilgrimages more than the average person, for public display but also to do penance for their greater and more public sins.[107] Much of what we have said about the motivations of Shenoute's aristocratic visitors, the naturalness of their moving about, their concern about their ability to keep God's commandments, may fit into an early phase of this process.

It is difficult to give a general assessment of the "catchment area" of the White Monastery, its pilgrimage field, or rather, the geographical distance from which Shenoute's personality was able to draw visitors.[108] It may safely be judged from his own works that the nomes of Shmin/Panopolis and Psoi were the monastery's natural reservoir of visitors.[109] Panopolitans of all social strata and ideological persuasions would come across the river to attend service at the monastery church, to bring gifts, to ask for the local saint's blessing or, if an educated pagan, more likely out of sheer curiosity. We have seen the inhabitants of these nomes look to the monastery for help in times of need, be it a famine[110] or the wish of the local populace to burn a pagan temple.[111] The *Lives* make a point of the fact that one visitor has travelled from a "distant region."[112] The place in question, Komentios, is not known from any other sources. It has been tentatively localized on the route between Koptos and the Red Sea harbor of Berenike.[113] Another visitor has travelled upstream from Oxyrhynchus/Behnasa, but this is a rich man who has with him 120 *solidi* (gold currency), which he wants to donate to the monastery.[114] The more mobile government and church officials would be able to travel much farther: from Antinoe, the governor's seat, certainly, maybe from Alexandria. Alexandria was also the starting point of the committee sent out by the archbishop with Shenoute's nomination to the bishop's office.[115] And we have seen the *Lives* report some monks to travel downstream from Shiet in the vicinity of the capital. The *Vita* tradition finally extends the sphere of attraction all the way to the Imperial Court. Shenoute is said to have visited Constantinople twice, once in connection with the council of Ephesus and once, under miraculous circumstances, upon special invitation of the emperor Theodosius II.[116] At the basis of this tradition there are his own reports about one visit to the court, the details of which are unknown,[117] and his participation at the council of Ephesus.[118]

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[106] J. Stopford, "Some Approaches to the Archaeology of Christian Pilgrimage," in: James Graham-Campbell (ed.), *Archaeology of Pilgrimage*, World Archaeology 26/1 (1994):62.

[107] Mary W. Helms, *Ulysses' Sail. An Ethnographic Odyssey of Power, Knowledge, and Geographical Distance* (Princeton 1988), 250.

[108] For the general concept of a geographical field, of which the sacred place is the center, cf. Morinis, "Introduction," 18f. and 25.

[109] One visitor's home village, Psenhoout, is explicitly identified as being in the nome of the city of Psoi: *Vita boh.* § 14: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:14; *Vita arab.*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 322.

[110] See above with n. 80.

[111] E.g. the temple of Pneuit: *Vita boh.* §§ 83f.: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:41; *Vita sah.*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 238; Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita* 3:84, 86. See Stefan

That Shenoute's entire monastery was widely recognized as a center of Christian spirituality by neighbors and visitors, and, even more, as a point of connection between this world and the other, becomes clear from the following quotations, where the opinion of the lay community surrounding the convent walls is used by the abbot mainly to discipline the monks, rather than referred to as a fact to be proud of:

Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit* 4, TAVO Beihefte Reihe B, Nr. 41/4 (Wiesbaden 1988), 1987–90 for the identification of the place with modern Banāwēṭ, 20 km northwest of Akhmim.

[112] *Vita boh.* § 36: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:23. *Vita arab.*: Amélineau, *Monuments*, 356.

[113] Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten* 4:1432.

[114] *Vita boh.* § 33: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:22. With wheat prices averaging 10 artabas per *solidus* in Byzantine Egypt, the money would have bought approximately 40,000 to 50,000 liters of wheat in the fifth century; cf. Roger Bagnall, *Currency and Inflation in Fourth-Century Egypt*, BASP Supplements 5 (Chico, CA 1985), 6.

[115] See above with n. 61.

[116] *Vita boh.* §§ 17–19, 53–67: Leipoldt and Crum, *Sinuthii vita* 1:15f., 29–35.

[117] Emmel, "Corpus," 5f. n. 6.

[118] Discussed by Emmel, "Corpus," 5f.

> … we do abominable, sinful deeds in the community of God, which is being called "heavenly Jerusalem" by those who come to it from many places, cities and regions, and whose inhabitants are called "angels."[119]

and

> … where are our friends in the outside world who come to us and calls us "angels" that they may see all our bad works and tricks and all our misdeeds …[120]

In fact, Shenoute uses these quotations to remind the monks of their responsibility vis-à-vis their lay neighbors and visitors for whom they must serve as examples of godly conduct, the more so because of their reputation in the outside world. The same rhetorical device is used by Besa, Shenoute's successor as abbot of the White Monastery (tenure: 465–post 474), to keep his monks to their vows:

> We are thought to be men of faith and godly men, filled with every kind of goodness, but if we are seen to be inconstant, it will be said of us: "we have considered you to be godfearing men. But behold, your way is our way and your works are our works."[121]

and:

> Now brethren, on no account cause people to blaspheme against God because of us or cause them to despise the name of our fathers because of our disobedience, when we disregard their teachings and their commandments which they enjoined upon us and their wisdom and their purity …[122]

Besa further reproaches one Herai, a nun who, as the title of one of the two letters Besa addressed to her informs us, has "broken the pledge of her constancy and forsaken the fountain of living water," that is, who has left the monastery. He says, referring apparently to a sarcastic remark the nun had made: "the place into which you were received and where you were honored, you have despised it, saying: 'your convent is the heavenly Jerusalem.' Truly it is the heavenly Jerusalem, and it is the mount which God blessed."[123]

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[119] Amélineau, *Schenoudi* 1:92.

[120] Ibid., 473. This theme reappears elsewhere with little variation: "Whom among those you know or who have come to you have you heard saying of one or more among you 'just' or of another or others among you 'they sin'. Do you say or think of this word at all that it applies to you? For not only do they call all of those who dwell inside you 'just' but they call them all together 'angels'." (ibid., 62) or "Let us show shame before men so that the salt will not become tasteless and be thrown away and trampled upon by men (cf. Matthew 5:13), as he has said, that is to say, let us not be reproached, despised and condemned with the words 'are these really the men who are thought to dwell with the angels?'" (ibid., 235f.).

[121] Kuhn, *Besa*, 48.

[122] Ibid., 82; similarly ibid., 63.

But if we moreover want to insist upon a proper form to be observed during this visit, a schedule, prescribed rites, an itinerary to follow, we shall have to wait for the holy man to die and his body and dwelling-place to be put into the hand of an organisation capable of shaping his cult and the visits to his sanctuary into such a form. We shall treat this development in the final paragraph.

VIII. *From Holy Place to Holy Man and back again*

In their recent contribution towards deconstructing "pilgrimage," Eade and Sallnow have discussed the location of the holy by means of the coordinates "(sacred) text," "person," and "place." Without undue generalization, we can find in Shenoute's case an instance of the "person-centred sacredness"[124] so characteristic for Late Antique Christianity.[125] And not only for Christianity: the same approach to sacredness was not unknown to Shenoute's pagan neighbors. In their perspective however, it is mixed with relics from a previous model, when the emphasis had centered on the "holy place," the temple. The temple of the Greco-Roman period had been more than a building for cultic purposes. Its architecture, especially its ground plan, and the decorations and inscriptions, which covered every inch of its surface, embodied the cosmic order and codified the world in its physical and transcendental aspects.[126] Although the temples had begun, even before the advent of Christianity, to suffer from lack of funding,[127] and the decrees of the Christian emperors had successively restricted and finally abolished pagan cults, the physical buildings were still there. And even if the building in its turn had been destroyed by zealous local Christians, the place still offered worshippers the opportunity to feel in harmony with the cosmos. In the above-mentioned sermon on the Last Judgment, Shenoute reports having apprehended his archenemy Gesios in the temple of Atripe:

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[123] Ibid., 106.

[124] John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, "Introduction," in: Eade and Sallnow (eds.), *Contesting the Sacred. The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London and New York 1991), 6–9. Richard L. Stirrat's contribution to this volume of essays gives a striking example of a shift from *place-* to *person-*centered sacredness in modern Sri Lanka catholicism, prompted by the profound changes in society after the end of the colonial rule: "Place and Person in Sinhala Catholic Pilgrimage," 122–136.

[125] This theme has been amply developed in the works of Peter Brown, e.g. "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *JRS* 61 (1971):80–101; reprinted with expanded bibliographical notes in: *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London 1982), esp. 109–112, 118f.; *Making of Late Antiquity*, 81–101, and *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity. Towards a Christian Empire*, The Curti Lectures 1988 (Madison 1992), 127 and 140–142 for the particular case of the holy men of Egypt. Robert Kirschner, "The Vocation of Holiness in Late Antiquity," *VC* 38 (1984):105–24 compares the function of the "holy man" in Christianity, Rabbinic judaism and Greco-Roman paganism. Garth Fowden, "The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society," *JHS* 102 (1982):33–59 argues that the pagan tradition of personal holiness called for an individual of high philosophical learning. The tendency of these individuals to shy back from involvement with worldly affairs and to move chiefly in their own privileged circles, was an important factor in the "leadership crisis of late paganism" (p. 33). From a socioeconomic viewpoint, Peter Garnsey and Greg Woolf, "Patronage of the rural poor in the Roman World," in: Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (ed.), *Patronage in Ancient Society*, Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient

> All these words now which I have said fit any merciless rich man, in particular however do they belong to that impious man and those who resemble him, whom I have encountered in the temple of Atripe. He was worshipping Satan and pouring him a libation, after having strewn the place with roses, peach branches, bunches of vine leaves and other sweet-smelling herbs, even though we had burnt that place of idol worship together with all the furnishings inside.[128]

This tragic figure stubbornly continues to carry out the rituals known to guarantee cosmic harmony in the place once built only for the purpose. At the same time he too has progressed towards a more person-centered conception of sacredness. While defending the position of the pagan holy man he does not deny the miracles of the Christian god and is quite willing to grant Jesus a place among the special people of Late Antiquity. As Shenoute says of one of their encounters, "... he said blasphemously that the miracles which the Lord of the Universe, Jesus, had performed, had been equally done by Apollonius of Tyana and Plato."[129]

Society 1 (London and New York 1989), 164f., discuss the various patrons, including the "holy man," among which late imperial peasants were able to choose.

[126] Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München 1992), 167–195.

[127] Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 261–268.

[128] Behlmer, *Schenute*, 91 b 15–92 a 19.

[129] Ibid., 92 b 21–93 a 2.

Eventually, at his death, Shenoute like other saints bequeathes his connective power to the monastery and its guardians and the balance swings back. An attempt by the guardians of the holy place to defend its sacredness vis-à-vis a much more famous competitor is shown in the Arabic *Life of Shenoute.*[130] Shenoute addresses Jesus Christ:

> I choose, master, that my children visit Jerusalem to prostrate themselves before your holy cross and where your feet have left their prints, and purify themselves.

Jesus though discourages him:

> You, you shall glorify Jerusalem in your monastery which you have dedicated to my name together with those who will hear and obey you, as equals to the angels. It is written that when the man left Jericho for Jerusalem, he fell into the hands of thieves. You must know that my cross is everywhere for whoever desires to repent ...

This warning does not arise from any actual criticism Shenoute had pronounced on Jerusalem pilgrimages taking place during his own lifetime. In his works the Holy City appears only in biblical quotations or, in a figurative sense, as this "heavenly Jerusalem" his neighbors chose to see embodied in his monastery. The episode, which is altogether missing from the Coptic *Lives*, might possibly be seen in the context of the sixth-century prohibition issued by some of the Eastern churches against visiting the Holy Land, where it was feared that their members might fall victims to Chalcedonian propaganda.[131] The *Life* insists on the usefulness to the soul of a visit to the White

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[130] Amélineau, *Monuments*, 333f. I owe the modifications to Amélineau's translation to the kindness of P. Bachmann who controlled the original Arabic.

[131] S. Peter Cowe, "Pilgrimage to Jerusalem by the Eastern Churches,", in: Kriss-Rettenbeck and Möhler (eds), *Wallfahrt*, 321. And vice versa: at the end of the fifth and in the sixth centuries western monks and pilgrims in general were discouraged from visiting Egyptian ascetics for fear of their being exposed to "heretical" teaching: Maria-Elisabeth Brunert, *Das Ideal der Wüstenaskese und seine Rezeption in Gallien bis zum Ende des 6. Jahrhunderts*, Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinertums 42 (Münster 1994), 332–336. A different motivation had prompted an earlier writer to warn against pilgrimages to Jerusalem because he feared general moral dangers: Gregory of Nyssa, *On Pilgrimages* (*NPNF* 2.5:382f.). Gregory's arguments are more on the line of Shenoute's criticism of the martyr cult in his times. As Gregory supports his local saints, Shenoute generally supports the cult of the martyrs, but warns against the secular activities associated with the feast day of the saint: Horn, *Studien*, 1–9.

Monastery, repeating its point with some little variation. Shenoute is reported to have told Besa:

> He who cannot visit Jerusalem in order to prostate himself before the cross on which Jesus the Messiah has died should come to offer in this church together with all the angels, and I shall pray for the sins they have committed previously, and whoever hears me, his sins shall not be held against him, even including the dead buried in this mountain, because I shall intercede with the Lord on their behalf.[132]

The episode of the bishop of Panopolis' visit as it is presented in the Life shows the attempt by the church to enlist the ascetic's prestige after his death. This is neither a unique nor a specifically Late Antique phenomenon. Only after the holy person's death can the church reassert its control over the saint's sacredness, because it has flown into the shrine erected over his body or another place intimately connected with his life and works.[133] The holy place becomes embedded in rituals and rules for pilgrims, equipped with priests and guardians. With the unique concentration of holy persons in Late Antiquity though, this phenomenon manifests itself in a world—the Mediterranean in the larger sense—covered at the end of the era with shrines and churches filled with relics. This is what happened to some degree to the White Monastery as well. The consolidation of the less formalized visits and pilgrimages of Late Antiquity into a more rigid scheme is shown in a manuscript from the Late Middle Ages, which describes a procession undertaken by the monks and the people of Akhmim.[134] Even in its heyday though, the White Monastery did not become the object of pilgrimage tourism from abroad[135] or, like Abu Mena, of imperial patronage. Both were bound to decline at any rate with the advent of Islamic rule. Rather, it remained well into the late Middle Ages a center of monophysite spirituality and learning,[136] until the monastery fell into ruins and only the church remained. Again in this century the power of the saint, as it manifests itself in a particular location, made the White Monastery a popular place of pilgrimage.[137]

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[132] Amélineau, *Monuments*, 392f. I quote this example from Amélineau's French, since there is a whole sentence, which Amélineau translated, missing in the Arabic text, as was pointed out to me by P. Bachmann.

[133] Eade and Sallnow, "Introduction," 7, 14–16.

[134] Hans Quecke, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet.* Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain 3 (Louvain 1970), 488–499; cf. also Emmel, "Corpus," 554f. The text is treated extensively in J. Timbie's contribution in this volume.

[135] The White Monastery is not mentioned in any work of the ample Byzantine travel literature, cf. Andreas Külzer, *Peregrinatio graeca in Terram Sanctam. Studien zu Pilgerführern und Reisebeschreibungen über Syrien, Palästina und den Sinai aus byzantinischer und metabyzantinischer Zeit*, Studien und Texte zur Byzantinistik 2 (Frankfurt 1994), 139–277, who gives a detailed comprehensive topographical list of the places in Syro-Palestine and Egypt included in these guides and descriptions.

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[136] See Emmel, "Corpus," 12–23 for a short history of the monastery between Shenoute's death and the 18th century; cf. also Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten* 2:606–25.

[137] According to Gérard Viaud, *Les pèlerinages coptes en Égypte d'après les notes du Qommos Jacob Muyser*. Bibliothèque d'Études Coptes 15 (Cairo 1979), 55f., the White Monastery was the most frequented modern place of pilgrimage in Egypt. This work, published in 1979, is based on the notes of the Coptic Catholic priest Jacob Muyser (1896–1956), who in his turn worked with materials assembled by the Coptologist Henri Munier (1884–1945) during the last years of the latter's life.

APPENDIX
OFFICIALS OF THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT IN CONTACT WITH SHENOUTE*

*Name***	*Title*	*Function*	*Shenoute*	*PLRE II*
Aedesius	comes	A, Petrus & addressee of met praetorium	L III 32,18	p. 11: comes (?et dux Thebaidis)
Aelianus	hegemon of the Thebaid, then augustalis in Alexandria	Interlocutor of Shenoute	A I 420,13	p. 14: (praefectus augustalis)
Alexander	hegemon	Spoke often with Sh. together with Petrus	L III 32,15	p. 56: praeses (?Thebaidis)
Andreas	comes	Interlocutor of Shenoute	A I 421,4	p. 87: comes (Thebaidis)
Caesarius	comes	Inquires about the necessity of ascetic living; writes, with Taurinus, about disturbances in church of Alexandria	L III 26,25; 29,26: 30,6	pp. 249f.: (Aegypti)
Chosroes	comes	Inquires first, with Iovinus, about free will; then, alone, about the eucharistic fast	A I 406,11; 407,3; 444,3–4 (Ch 50,24; 62,25.49f.)	p. 293: comes (et dux Thebaidis)
Chrysippus	comes	Visits Sh. together with Marcellinus; protects Sh. against accusers	L III 31,28; 32,5	p. 297: comes (East); may have been comes et dux Thebaidis
Dioscurides	hegemon	Praised by Sh. for impartiality, almsgiving and sobriety	A I 420,7	p. 368: praeses (?Thebaidis)

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* Sh = Shenoute; L = Leipoldt, Sinuthii vita; A = Amélineau, Schenoudi; Ch = Chassinat, Shenouti; PLRE II = Martindale, Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire II.

** The names of the officials are given here in the Latin form (to facilitate consultation of PLRE II).

Dorotheus	hegemon	Corresponds with Sh. (accusation: hiding thieves in monastery)	L III 23,4; 24,4	p. 377: praeses (?Thebaidis)
Flavianus	hegemon	Commended by Shenoute	(A I 419,2); Ch 84,36f.	—
Heraclammon	hegemon	Formerly scholasticus of Dioscurides; as hegemon praised by Sh.	A I 420,8; 435,1	pp. 538f.: praeses (?Thebaidis)
Iovinus	comes	Visits with Chosroes	A I 406,10 (Ch 62,20)	p. 622: comes (Aegypti et Thebaidis)
Marcellinus	hegemon	Visits Sh. with Chrysippus	L III 31,27	p. 708: praeses (?Thebaidis)
NN	?	Brother of the comes Spudasius; called "friend" by Shenoute	A I 420,11	—
NN	comes	Inquires whether the measure of the world is the measure of heaven; put into place by Sh.	A I 400,7	—
NN	son of the stratelates	Asserts "this body will not rise"; put into place by Sh.	L III 32,27	—
NN	tribunus of the *KOUCITHC*	Interlocutor of Shenoute	L III 33,6	—
NN (Flavianus?)	hegemon	One military leader denounces Sh. to this hegemon, because of his preaching against pillaging	Ch 93,41f.	—
Petrus	hegemon	P., Aedesius & addressee of letter met by Sh. in the praetorium; spoke often with Sh. together with Alexander	L III 32,15.19	p. 865: praeses (?Thebaidis)
Spudasius	comes of the Empress	Praised by Shenoute, called his "friend"	A I 420,10	p. 1027: comes (Augustae)
Taurinus	hegemon	Visits Sh. with Caesarius	L III 30,6	p. 1056: praeses (?Thebaidis)

Theodosius	dux/ comes/ hegemon	Corresponds with Sh.	L III 25,10; 26,8f.22 (without name)	p. 1101: comes et dux (Thebaidis)
Theodotus	comes	Interlocutor of Shenoute	A I 420,9	pp. 1103f.: comes Aegypti; recipient of copy of Cod. Theod. VI,28,8 (435 Jan. 29)

ARAB CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGES IN THE PROTO-BYZANTINE PERIOD (V–VII CENTURIES)*

IRFAN SHAHÎD

Before their conversion to Christianity, the Arabs made pilgrimage to various sites in the Arabian Peninsula and the Fertile Crescent—the area of their settlement and diffusion in pre-Islamic times. For them as for other Semites, the pilgrimage was a highly developed religious institution which, *inter alia*, involved *ṭawāf*, circumambulation.[1] Nothing illustrates better the importance of this institution among the Arabs than the fact that the vocabulary of pilgrimage in the Arabic language is extensive and significant. It is almost unique.[2] In addition to the convenience of the verb *ḥajja*, "perform pilgrimage," as a transitive verb, having as its direct object the shrine or site that the pilgrimage is made to, there are the following derivations from the verb: *ḥajj*, "pilgrimage"; *ḥājj*, "the pilgrim"; *maḥajja*, "pilgrim route", then "a route"; *maḥajja*, "pilgrimage center";[3] *ḥijja*, "a year", originally the annual festival or pilgrimage; *ḏū al-Ḥijja*, a month of the year named after the pilgrimage, performed during that month; *ḥajjāj*, "the one who frequently performs the pilgrimage", and then a proper noun, a personal name, Ḥajjāj.[4] The sanctity in which the pilgrimage was held by the Arabs rubbed off on three months of the year, which were called the "sacred months", a period of universal peace, during which the pilgrimage was performed.[5]

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* The following abbreviations will be used in this article: Shahîd, *BASIC* = Irfan Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century* (Washington, DC 1995); Shahîd, *BAFIC* = Irfan Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (Washington, DC 1989); Shahîd, *BAFOC* = Irfan Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, DC 1984).

[1] For the idols of the Arabs in pagan pre-Islamic Arabia, some of whose sites were pilgrimage centers, see Ibn-al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, ed. N.A. Faris, Princeton Oriental Series 14 (Princeton 1952).

[2] The only discussion known to me of the vocabulary of pilgrimage is in Jean-Pierre Arrignon, "Le pèlerinage dans la Russie prémongole," in *Les Saints et leur sanctuaire à Byzance*, edd. C. Jolivet-Lévy, M. Kaplan, and J.-P. Sodini (Paris 1993), 173; and it is a discussion of only three terms.

[3] For *maḥajja* as a toponym, there is the precious reference attested in a Syriac ecclesiastical document, the subscriptions of the archimandrites of Arabia, for which see the present writer in *BASIC*, I 2.828. As a common noun in the sense of a pilgrimage center, the term seems to have disappeared from the Arabic lexicon, although as a noun of place it is the more natural term for a pilgrimage center than for a pilgrimage route.

After the rise of Christianity and its spread in the Arab area, those Arabs who were converted, and they were many, retained their devotion to the custom of performing pilgrimage. As Christians, they now visited the well-known centers of pilgrimage common to all Christians. In this proto-Byzantine period from the reign of Constantine to that of Heraclius, the principal pilgrimage center that dwarfed all others was, of course, Jerusalem,[6] the city of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, and with it the *loca sancta* of the Holy Land; but there were others in Oriens, hallowed by the relics of martyrs and saints: in Euphratensis, Syria Prima, Osrhoene, and Mesopotamia. It is the latter that are more the concern of this study because they are the ones with which the Christian Arabs were associated. But before treating them, a few words on Arab pilgrimages to Jerusalem and the *loca sancta* of the Holy Land may be said:

I. *The Holy Land*

In the Desert of Judah not far from Jerusalem, there came into existence around 427 CE a little Arab bishopric, called in the sources the bishopric of the Parembole, and its first bishop was also its phylarch, Aspebetos/Petrus.[7] The Christian Arab federates, of whom Aspebetos (Petrus) was both phylarch and bishop, no doubt performed the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and must have continued to do so under the bishops who came after Petrus in this proto-Byzantine period, namely, Auxolaus, John, Valens, and Petrus II. The sources suggest that some

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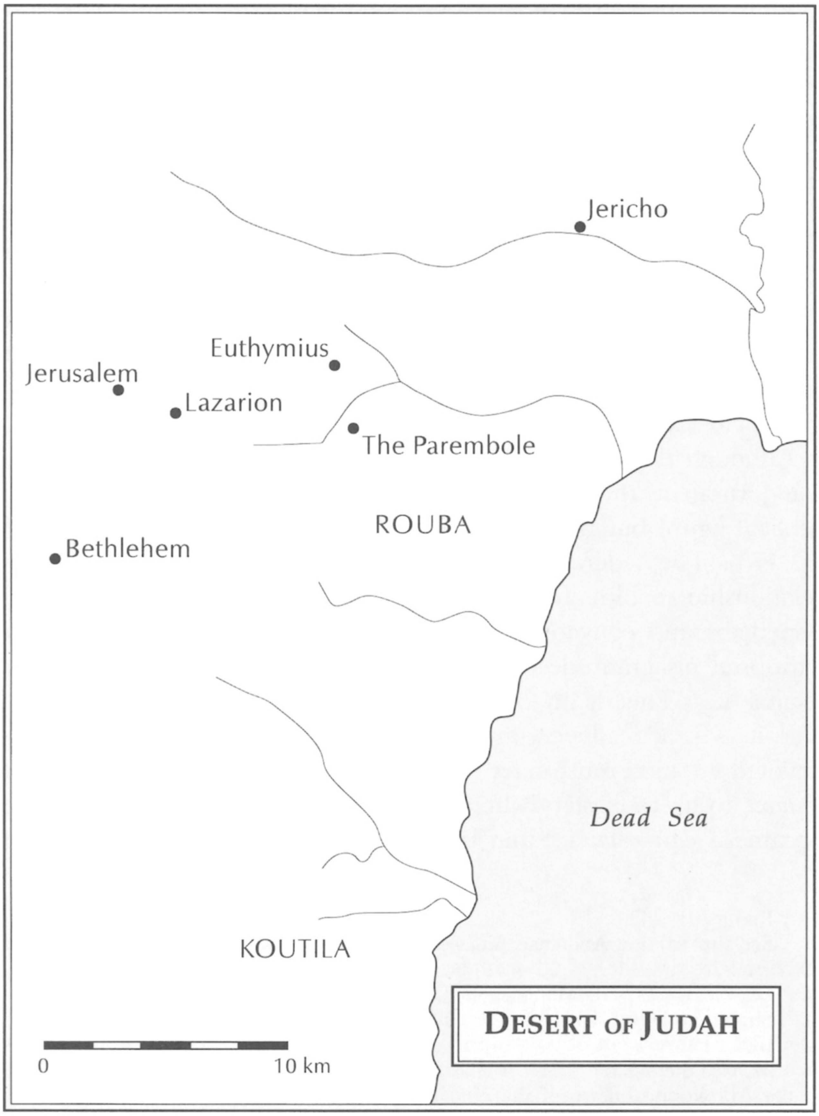
[4] The paucity of pilgrimage terms even in a language such as Greek is striking. Apparently during the period of Ottoman occupation, the term for pilgrim, χατζής, was derived from the Arabic root *ḥajj*(!), and it is only in recent times that Greek has reverted to using a classical term for "pilgrim", προσκυνητής. But the former term is not entirely out of use, and it also survives in modern Greek proper names, such as Χατζηδάκις.

[5] See Procopius, *Wars*, II.xvi.18. Ḏu al-Ḥijja was one of these three months. Procopius refers to the period of the universal peace as "about two months".

[6] For Jerusalem as the destination of Christian pilgrims in this proto-Byzantine period, see, e.g., John Wilkinson, "Christian Pilgrims in Jerusalem during the Byzantine Period," *PEQ* 108 (1976):75–101.

[7] For the Parembole and its bishops, see the present writer in *BAFIC*, 181–185.


Jericho
Euthymius
Jerusalem
Lazarion
The Parembole
ROUBA
Bethlehem
Dead Sea
KOUTILA
0
10 km
DESERT OF JUDAH

villages in the vicinity, such as Bethaboudis and Lazarium, were ethnically Arab or partly so; the names of some Christian Arabs, such as Thaʿlaba and ʿUrqūb,[8] have been preserved in the sources. These certainly would have made pilgrimage to Jerusalem, being so close to it, as did the Christian Arabs of Palaestina Tertia, Rhomaioi, known to us from the churches built in the cities of the Negev. The six of them might be termed the Hexapolis of Palaestina Tertia.

In addition to federate Arabs and Rhomaic Arabs from the entire Oriens, there were some Arabs who were neither, but who hailed from the Arabian Peninsula and who, too, visited Jerusalem. Two of their names have survived. One of them was al-Burj ibn-Mushir, a member of the tribe of Ṭayy, a well-known Christian tribe. After committing incest, he repented and retired to Jerusalem.[9] The other was the famous poet al-Aʿshā, of the Christian tribe of Bakr, who had visited the Christians of Najrān, in South Arabia, then the Christian Ghassānids of Oriens. He included Jerusalem ("Ūrishalim") in the list of cities he visited.[10]

Although the main pilgrimage center for these Arab communities was Jerusalem, there was another center that was not related to any Biblical figure but rather to a fifth-century holy man, St. Euthymius (d. 473). The federate Arabs of the Parembole stood in a special relationship to him. It was he who cured the child of the phylarch Aspebetos and converted his Arabs. The federate Aspebetos/Petrus expressed his gratitude by helping the saint build his *lavra* and protecting it.[11] The death of the holy man reverberated in Palestine, and it is practically certain that the federate Arabs who were so devoted to him must have performed the pilgrimage or visitation (*ziyārat*) to his monastery where he was buried.[12] And so the monastery became a *dayr maḥjūj*,[13] that is, a pilgrimage center. The attachment of the Arabs to the monastery of St. Euthymius must have grown even stronger when two of them became *hegoumenoi* of the lavra, the former being a federate Arab, the latter a Rhomaios.[14] Furthermore, towards the end of the fifth century, the incumbent of the patriarchate of Jerusalem was a Rhomaic Arab, Elias, the energetic ecclesiastic who presided over the patriarchate for some twenty years. His ethnic background could also have enhanced the interest of the small Arab community of Palaestina Tertia, mostly in the neighboring Desert of Judah, in performing the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[15] Nearby Bethlehem, the city of the Nativity, would also have been visited, as well as Nazareth, the city of the Annunciation and the residence of the child Jesus.

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[8] Ibid., 201–202.

[9] See Ibn-Saʿīd al-Andalusī, *Nashwat al-Ṭarab* I, ed. N. ʿAbd al-Raḥman (Amman 1982), I 233.

[10] *Dīwān al-Aʿshā*, ed. M. Ḥusayn (Cairo n.d.), 41.

[11] Shahîd, *BAFIC*, 181–182.

[12] Ibid., 193.

[13] *Maḥjūj*, the Arabic *nomen patientis* of the root *ḥajj*, is another convenient term in the Arabic vocabulary of the pilgrimage, as it indicates a monastery or a holy place that is also a pilgrimage center in order to distinguish it from others that are not. For such *loca sancta* as pilgrimage centers, see the title of a chapter, "*al-buyūt al-maḥjūja*", in Ibn-Fadl-Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār* I, ed. A. Zaki (Cairo 1924), 222. A most instructive work in Arabic for the many *loca sancta* of the three Abrahamic religions, those that were both pilgrimage and visitation centers, is that of the Muslim

Palaestina Tertia had two pilgrimage centers for the Arabs of the Sinai Peninsula, especially those of the Arab city of Phārān: the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, and that of Rhaithou, the seaport on the Gulf of Clysma. In addition to being near the scene of the Decalogue, a *locus sanctus* of the first order, St. Catherine's was the monastery that witnessed the martyrdom of forty of its monks on 28 December. Their feast was commemorated on 14 January, and it is natural to suppose that the Christian Arabs of the region would make the pilgrimage to both the mountain and the monastery. Rhaithou also witnessed the massacre of forty monks by the Blemmyes, and their feast was commemorated on the same day as those of St. Catherine's. The Arabs of the region, notably those of Phārān, the most important urban center in the area, would have made the pilgrimage to Rhaithou, since it was a group of Phārānite Arabs that under the leadership of Obedianus avenged the murder of the forty monks and vanquished the Blemmyes before they could board their ship and get away.[16]

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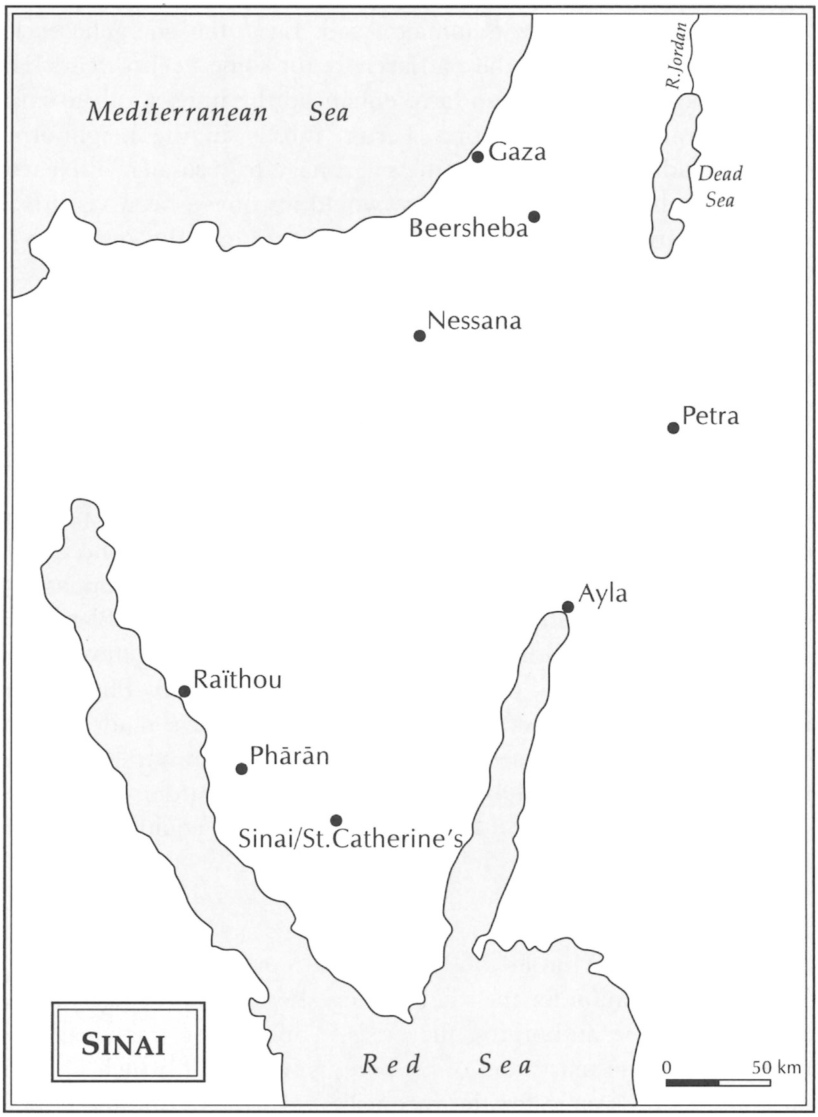
writer, ʿAli Ibn-Bakr al-Harawī (d. 1215). It was translated and annotated by Janine Sourdel-Thomine, as *Guide des lieux de pèlerinage* (Damascus 1957).

[14] Shahîd, *BAFIC,* 191–192.

[15] Ibid., 192–196.

[16] See the present writer in *BAFOC,* 297–302.


Mediterranean Sea
R. Jordan
Gaza
Dead Sea
Beersheba
Nessana
Petra
Ayla
Raïthou
Phārān
Sinai/St.Catherine's
SINAI
Red Sea
0
50 km

II. *Euphratensis*

A. *Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa*

After Jerusalem, Sergiopolis was the most important pilgrimage center in Byzantine Oriens in this proto-Byzantine period, and the Arabs had a very special relationship to it. Its saint, Sergius, a Tetrarchic martyr, was buried there, among them, in the βαρβαρικὸν πεδίον, in a site that was both a station on the Strata Diocletiana and a venue for trading caravans. The protection of the shrine, lying as it did in the midst of an exposed arid area, was the responsibility of the Equites Promoti Indigenae, who, as *Indigenae* indicates, could only have been Arabs of the region, and of the *foederati* of Byzantium from the fourth century onwards, possibly starting with the Tanūkhids. The Arabs must also have provided for Sergiopolis, located as it was in the middle of an arid and infertile region. A Greek inscription speaks of the services of a Saracen Arab cameleer in provisioning the city of the saint.[17]

Arab veneration for, and devotion to, the saint and his shrine found its fullest expression in the Ghassānids,[18] the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the sixth century. Sergius was of special interest to these because he was a military saint who, moreover, fought against the Persians. Hence his appeal to the Ghassānids, professional soldiers in the service of Byzantium in its wars against Persia, against the pagan Arab Lakhmids, clients of the Persians, and against the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula. Sergius was their patron saint, and he remained so for other Arab tribes even after the rise of Islam, such as Taghlib, which carried his image with them in battle. The principal Ghassānid church in their capital, Jābiya, in Palaestina Secunda in the Golan, was dedicated to St. Sergius. Although all the Ghassānid phylarchs/kings were devoted to the saint and his shrine, yet it was Mundir (569–582) who represented the climax of Ghassānid veneration for the saint and his shrine. After being betrayed by the Byzantine authorities, the crisis in his career was weathered in the 570s at the martyrion of St. Sergius in Ruṣāfa, which he himself chose as the venue for the reconciliation with Byzantium, where he met with the *magister militum* Justinian.[19] And it was probably after this reconciliation that he had the *praetorium extra muros* built outside the walls of Sergiopolis, a structure that still stands, although dilapidated, and where his inscription νικᾷ ἡ τύχη ’Αλαμουνδάρου may still be seen.[20] The structure, definitely a *praetorium* and not a church, must have increased the drawing power of Sergiopolis as a pilgrimage center for the Arabs. It was there that Munḏir would meet with the chiefs of the various tribes of the region, and it was at the celebration of the feast of the saint, either 7 October or 15 November, that the *mawsim*, the seasonal market festival of the Arabs, was held. The Ghassānids continued to be the protectors of Sergiopolis till the end of the Byzantine period in Oriens, and the shrine remained a pilgrimage center well into the Islamic period, until the Mongol invasion, which brought to a close its long history as the most important pilgrimage center in Oriens after Jerusalem.

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[17] On this inscription, see C. Mondésert, "Inscriptions et objets chrétiens de Syrie et de la Palestine," *Syria* 37 (1960):123–125.

[18] See Shahîd, *BASIC*, 2.954–962.

B. *Cyrrhus*

In addition to Sergiopolis, Euphratensis had another pilgrimage center, Cyrrhus. It was there that two of the most important saints of Christianity were buried. Cosmas and Damian were two Arab saints, brothers and doctors who preached the Gospel by healing the sick without receiving any remuneration for their services; hence their title ἀνάργυροι, "silverless". For their Christianity, they were martyred during the reign of Diocletian, and their cult spread quite early, but received an extra impetus in the sixth century in both East and West, possibly because of the great plague of 542 CE. And it was natural that the surge in their popularity should be related to the plague of 542 and to subsequent outbreaks in the Orient. When the emperor Justinian was cured (after being taken seriously ill) by the intercession of the two saints, he redecorated and enlarged their church in Constantinople, and, what is more relevant, he reflected his gratitude to the saints through attention to the city where they were buried by repairing the walls of Cyrrhus and building its aqueduct. The fame of the basilica, built over the relics of the two saints, was widespread even before imperial interest in the city, since

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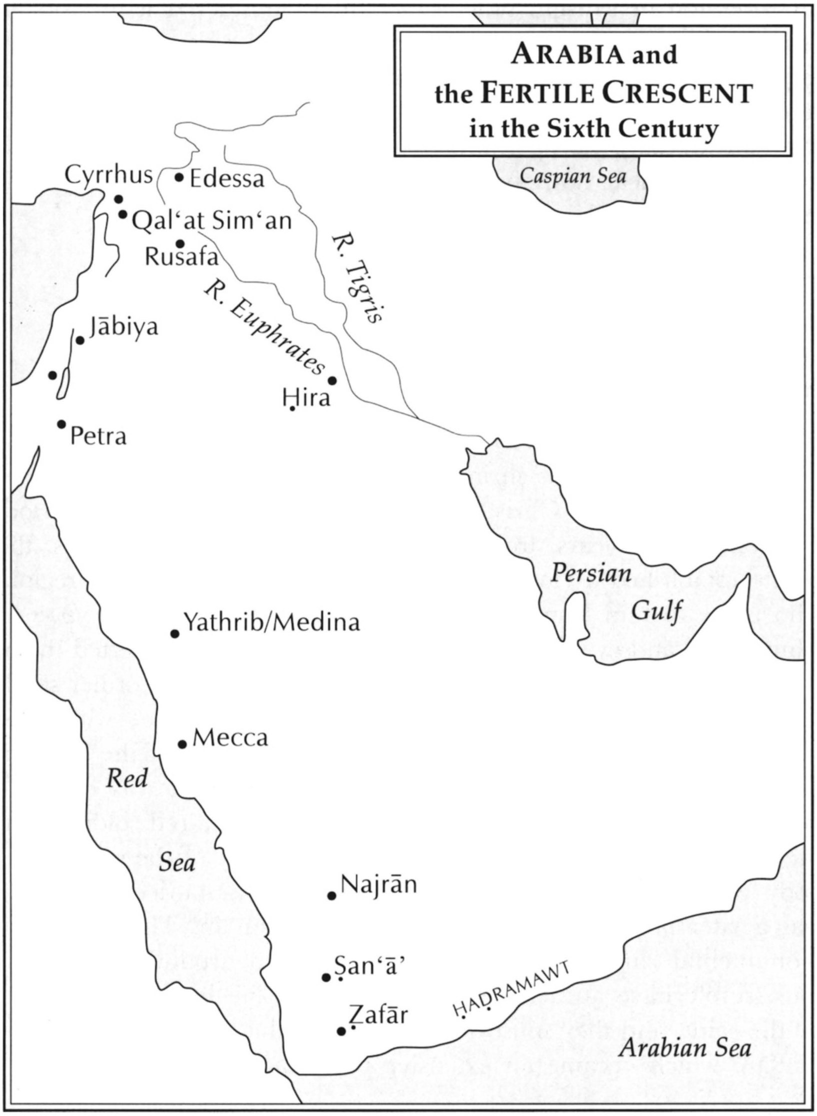
[19] Ibid., 374–378.

[20] Ibid., 501–505.


ARABIA and
the FERTILE CRESCENT
in the Sixth Century
Caspian Sea
Cyrrhus
Edessa
Qal'at Sim'an
Rusafa
R. Tigris
R. Euphrates
Jābiya
Ḥira
Petra
Persian
Gulf
Yathrib/Medina
Mecca
Red
Sea
Najrān
Ṣan'ā'
ḤAḌRAMAWT
Ẓafār
Arabian Sea

Theodoret attests to its fame in the fifth century, and in the sixth its renown must have increased because of the plagues and the natural desire of pious Christians to visit the church of the saints who were the patrons of medicine. The basilica over their remains attracted the attention of Muslim writers, and they considered it one of the "wonders of the world", a fact which must have enhanced the drawing power of Cyrrhus as a pilgrimage center.[21] Euphratensis was a region where the Arab element was dominant, and the chances are that its Christian Arabs performed the pilgrimage to Cyrrhus, although it remains unclear how many of them were aware of the Arab origin of the two saints.

III. *Syria Prima*

A. *Qalʿat Simʿān/Telanissos*

St. Symeon Senior (d. 459) was a saint who was closely associated with the Arabs, and his shrine became, no doubt, a pilgrimage center frequented by the Christian Arabs in this proto-Byzantine period. For some thirty years, from the top of his pillar at Telanissos, the Stylite established a close relationship with the Arabs of the region, who came to him from within the empire, from across the *limes* as Ishmaelites, and even from South Arabia. The saint converted them, comforted them, healed them, cured one of their queens of her sterility, and gave them laws. On his death, the Arabs came with their weapons and camels and tried to possess themselves of the body of the saint in order to bury him in their territory. It was only the arrival of the *magister militum* Ardabur with five hundred soldiers that prevented the Arabs from carrying away the body of the saint.[22] His body was then taken to Antioch, where he was buried, but there was a later *translatio* to what is now Qalʿat Simʿān. The impressive monumental shrine built on a mountain and around his column must surely have attracted the Arabs, whose life had been touched by the saint, and they must have performed the pilgrimage to Qalʿat Simʿān, which became an extensive pilgrimage complex.

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[21] On Cyrrhus and the two saints, and Justinian's interest in the city, see *ibid.*, 963–965.

[22] Shahîd, *BAFIC*, 149–153; p. 160, and n. 7.

B. *Mesopotamia*

The attachment of the Arabs to Sergius in Euphratensis is reflected in the erection of a shrine to the same saint in Mesopotamia, which did not have his relics. Aḥudemmeh, the Monophysite patriarch of the Orient (559–575), who evangelized the Arabs of Mesopotamia, was forced to build a replica of the martyrion of Sergius in Sergiopolis/ Ruṣāfa for the Mesopotamian Arabs because of their veneration for the saint whose shrine they used to visit to perform the pilgrimage in distant Euphratensis. In order to save them making the long journey, Aḥudemmeh had to duplicate the Euphratensian martyrion, since this was the only way he could wean them away from performing the pilgrimage to faraway Sergiopolis.[23]

IV. *Osrhoene*

A. *Edessa*

In addition to Sergiopolis, Qalʿat Simʿān, and Cyrrhus, the northern part of Oriens had another center that must have drawn some Christian Arab pilgrims to it, namely Edessa in Osrhoene.

Edessa, the principal holy city of Oriens Christianus for the Semites of the region, owes its emergence as such to the Arab dynasty of the Abgarids. It was around 200 CE that Abgar IX adopted Christianity, thus enabling Edessa to become the first Christian state in history whose ruler was officially and openly a Christian. In so doing, Abgar laid the foundation for the subsequent development of Edessa as the center of Oriental Christianity, the counterpart of Antioch, the Seleucid foundation, which was the center of Greek Christianity in the Orient. Memories of Abgar remained alive for a long time after the fall of the city and the dynasty to the emperor Gordian in the third century, and even after the Muslim conquest.

In addition to the strong presence of the first Christian king in Edessa in the proto-Byzantine period, there was the legend of the earlier Arab king, the namesake of Abgar IX and supposedly a contemporary of Christ, with whom he carried on a correspondence. The exchange of letters was well-known in Edessa in this period: indeed, Christ's letter was inscribed above the gate of the city; and there was the famous Mandylion, another relic that went back to the time of Jesus himself and with whom the Arab king was associated.[24] This related Edessa as a Christian city to apostolic times, and its apostolicity was literally clinched by the remains of St. Thomas buried in Edessa, over which was built the church dedicated to the apostle. That Edessa was a great center of pilgrimage owing to all these associations is clearly reflected in the enthusiasm that drove Egeria in the fourth century to visit Edessa and to consider that her pilgrimage to the lands of the Bible would not have been complete without visiting this city. This she did: she visited the church of St. Thomas, saw the letters and also the palace and tomb of Abgar, all of which the bishop of the city insisted must be visited by good Christians.[25] Edessa was the capital of Osrhoene, a region that was heavily Arab in ethnic affiliation since the days of Xenophon. The apostolicity of the city no doubt drew the Arabs of the region to Edessa, and pilgrimage to it was made even more attractive for them by the realization that the city had been ruled by an Arab dynasty, and, what is more, one that had been associated with the apostle Thomas and indeed with Christ himself according to tradition.

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[23] Shahîd, *BAFOC*, 420–421. Where in Persian Mesopotamia the new shrine was located is not clear.

V. *South Arabia*

A. *Najrān*

Around 520 CE events took place that proved to be the most important in the spiritual history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam, namely, the martyrdoms of the Christians of Najrān in South Arabia, who chose death rather than conversion to Judaism offered them by the Ḥimyarite king, Yūsuf As'ar Yath'ar. These martyrdoms were especially significant, coming as they did after the Peace of the Church in 311 CE exceeding in their numbers (about three hundred) the martyrs of Lyons (about 49), and including so many women

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[24] For the Abgarids, Edessa, and their Christianity, see the present writer in *Rome and the Arabs* (Washington, DC 1984), 3–4, 21–22, 47, 109–112.

[25] On Egeria's visit to Edessa and its Christian and Abgarid monuments, see John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Lands* (Jerusalem-Warminster 1981), 113–117.

(slightly fewer than a hundred).[26] Echoes of these events reverberated in Oriens Christianus, and the entire Christian *Oikoumene* collaborated in avenging these martyrdoms, which resulted in the conversion of South Arabia into a Christian country. The full significance and impact of these martyrdoms on the history of the Arabs and indeed the whole of the Christian East, especially the Monophysite Orient, have not yet been fully understood, let alone researched; but only what is relevant to pilgrimage will be explored and discussed in this study.

1. After being a flourishing caravan city on the historic *via odorifera* of Western Arabia, Najrān immediately became a city of martyrs, a holy city of the Christian Orient, especially for the Monophysites, taking its place alongside Axum, Abu Mina, Edessa, and Etchmiazin among the Abyssinians, Copts, Syrians, and Armenians respectively.

2. Most particularly, a Kaʿba in the form of the *martyrion* of Najrān was built on the very relics of the martyrs, and Christian Arabs travelled there in pilgrimage. This pilgrimage was especially significant to them because these martyrs were their own kinsmen, Arabs like themselves, unlike SS Sergius or Thomas, whose shrines they visited in Oriens. Najrān became the Christian pilgrimage center of pre-Islamic Arabia, which was visited not only by the Arabs of the Peninsula but also by the Ḥimyarites and the Abyssinians. For the Peninsular Arabs and the Southern Semites, Najrān was closer and more convenient than the centers in Oriens and the Fertile Crescent. It became a serious rival to the other Kaʿba in Mecca, and to Mt. ʿArafāt whither the pre-Islamic pagan Arabs used to travel in order to perform the pilgrimage.

3. The Arab tribe of Najrān, Banū al-Ḥārith, the Ḥārithids, and more specifically the clan of Banū-ʿAbd al-Madān within the Ḥārithids, were the custodians of the *martyrion*. And so these became the counterpart of the tribe of Quraysh, some of whose clans, such as Hās̲h̲im and ʿAbd al-Dār, were the custodians of the Kaʿba in Mecca.[27]

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[26] On the list of men and women martyrs, see *The Book of the Himyarites*, ed./trans. A. Moberg (Lund 1924), cxvi–cxvii and cxxi; and the present writer in "The Martyrdom of Early Arab Christians: Sixth Century Najrān," *The First One Hundred Years: A Centennial Anthology Celebrating Antiochian Orthodoxy in North America* (Englewood, NJ 1995), 178–182.

[27] On the *martyrion* in Najrān as a pilgrimage center, on the Ḥārithids, and on the clan of Banū ʿAbd al-Madān, custodians of the *martyrion*, see the present writer in "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP* 33 (1979):73–74.

The *martyrion* in Najrān must have been an impressive structure, built as it was in the Arabian South, a region known for monumental architecture, reflected in its castles and palaces. The Arabic sources have preserved some descriptions of this *martyrion*, which, in the opinion of the Abbasid scholar al-Jāḥiẓ, was one of the wonderful buildings with which the Arabs could be credited and which might be compared with those of the Persians.[28] But the descriptions of the *martyrion* that have survived in the Arabic sources give only glimpses of what it must have looked like. From these incidental descriptions, the following features of the *martyrion* may be gleaned. Evidently it was a square domical building; its dome (*qubba*) was made of leather, for the making of which three hundred pieces of hide were used. The cube, the square structure on which the dome rested, was apparently an elevated structure, access to which was gained by a flight of stairs; each side of the square structure had a door. The *martyrion* was, in all probability, covered with brocade, and was decorated with precious stones and mosaics, referred to in the sources as decorative materials of the religious edifices of Najrān of which the *martyrion* was one, and to which may be added Najrān's church and monastery.[29]

Najrān was not the only city in South Arabia that became a pilgrimage center. Although it was the main one, there were others to the south of Najrān and to the southeast in Hadramawt, where martyrdoms took place and which also became local pilgrimage centers when *martyria* were built over the relics of those who died for their faith,[30] around AD 520. However, many uncertainties attend discussing them, because of the state of the relevant sources. One of them, however, emerges more clearly from the later Islamic sources, namely, al-Qalīs (from Greek *ekklesia*), the great church built by Abraha, the Ethiopian soldier of fortune who ruled South Arabia in the second third of the sixth century. The sources state that he built it as a splendid church in San'ā' specifically as a great pilgrimage center, and, what is more, in order to divert the Arabs of the Peninsula away from visiting Mecca and its Kaʿba.[31] If true, this would be the first attested reference to the rivalry that now obtained in Arabia between the two pilgrimage centers—the pagan one in the north, in Hijaz, associated with Mecca, and the Christian one in the south, in Yaman, associated with Najrān and Sanʿā'.

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[28] See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. A. Hārūn (Cairo 1938), 72.

[29] For the description of the *martyrion* of Najrān in the Arabic sources see Shahîd, "Byzantium in South Arabia," 70–72.

[30] For other regions of South Arabia in which martyrdoms took place, see the table of contents of *The Book of the Himyarites*, ci–civ. The *Book* has survived in a mutilated form, but luckily the table of contents has survived in its entirety.

Thus in the spiritual journey of the Arabs before Islam, the sixth century of the Christian era was the one that saw the climax of their Christian witness, when, as donors of the holy blood of martyrs, they contributed to the community of Christian saints of the universal Church. This, more than anything else, gave them an important place in the ecclesiastical map of Christendom, a place that is even today remembered on 24 October when the feast of the Martyrs of Najrān and their chief martyr, St. Arethas, is celebrated by the Church, although it is not often realized, except by a few scholars, that St. Arethas was an Arab saint. And his city, Najrān, of which he was the *sayyid*, continued to flourish as the holy city of the Arabs, their martyropolis, throughout the sixth century and the first half of the seventh.

VI. *Epilogue*

The rise of Islam and the Arab conquest of the Fertile Crescent in the seventh century revolutionized the life of the Arabs and deeply affected the fortunes of the Christians among them, and also their pilgrimage centers. This was the watershed of Arab history, and thenceforward the Arabs have been divided into Muslim and Christian Arabs.

For those who adopted Islam, the new faith concentrated all pilgrimage centers in Mecca and its environs. Even Jerusalem ceased to be a place of pilgrimage and together with Medina, became the object of *ziyārat*, visitation, not of *ḥajj*, pilgrimage. Besides the privileged place given to Mecca, Islam carried the old Semitic attachment to the pilgrimage as a religious institution to its furthest point, when the *ḥajj* became one of the five pillars of faith, enjoined by the Koran.[32] It became canonical, having scriptural authority behind it, unlike its counterpart in Christianity, which did not.

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[31] For Abraha and Sanʿā', see Shahîd, "Byzantium in South Arabia," 81–83.

[32] For the pilgrimage and its place in Islam, see the present writer in "The Islamic Pilgrimage," *JAC*, Ergänzungsband 20,1.2 (1995), 340–347.

For the Christian Arabs who kept their faith, this was a period of decline, and it affected their pilgrimage centers, one after another.

1. Not long after the death of the prophet Muḥammad in 632 CE and in the caliphate of Omar (634–644 CE), the Christians of Najrān were ordered to vacate their city and emigrate out of the Arabian Peninsula. Eventually Najrān, Christian Najrān, disappeared, and is now represented by Ukhdūd,[33] a desolate place, while another Najrān, Muslim Najrān, has appeared in its vicinity.

2. The evacuees from Najrān settled in both parts of the Fertile Crescent, in Iraq and in al-Shām (Oriens). Those who emigrated to Iraq were settled in Najrāniyya near Kūfa, and most probably carried with them relics of their martyrs from South Arabia for a *depositio* in their new environment, which no doubt became a local pilgrimage center.[34] But those who emigrated to al-Shām seem to have done better than their brethren in Iraq: their main center apparently was Najrān in Trachonitis, a toponym that was the namesake of Najrān in South Arabia. Apparently a great *martyrion*/church (*bīʿat*) was built there, no doubt over the relics brought from South Arabian Najrān, which Yāqūt, the Muslim geographer, described as "great, beautiful, built upon marble columns, and decorated with mosaics. It is a blessed place to which both Muslims and Christians make vows."[35] To the south of this Najrān, in Bostra, there was also Dayr Najrān, the Monastery of Najrān, also described by Yāqūt as "wonderful" architecturally; and it shared with the church of Najrān in Trachonitis its character as a votive shrine.[36] Votive offerings asso-

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[33] See G.R.D. King, "Settlement in Western and Central Arabia and the Gulf in the Sixth–Eighth Centuries A.D.," in G.R.D. King and Averil Cameron, eds, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East II: Land Use and Settlement Patterns*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 2 (Princeton 1994), 201–205.

[34] For the Najrānite diaspora in the Fertile Crescent, see Shahîd, "Byzantium in South Arabia," 76–80.

[35] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān* 5 (Beirut 1957), 270.

[36] Ibid., vol. II (Beirut 1956), 539.—There may have been only one pilgrimage center in this region. Yāqūt possibly, by a *lapsus calami*, confused the church at Najrān in Trachonitis with the monastery in Bostra, since certain aspects of his description are common to both. In both accounts there is reference to vows made to these two places, to a *munādī*, a herald or town crier, who goes around concerning these vows, and to an annual contribution (a portion of what the people used to vow) which the church and the monastery used to make to the sultan. On the other hand, the account in Yāqūt contains elements that clearly distinguish the one from the other and suggest that there were indeed two *loca sancta* that functioned as pilgrimage centers in this region, the northern part of what used to be the *provincia* Arabia in Byzantine times.

ciated with these two edifices imply relics of saints, and the chances are that these two were local pilgrimage centers, made possible by the *translatio* of relics from South Arabian Najrān.

It is possible that the relative prosperity of the Najrānite emigrants in the western part of the Fertile Crescent, al-Shām, was due to the tolerant rule of the Umayyads of Bilād al-Shām, who rested their power on the support of the old Christian tribes of the region, such as Kalb and Ju̱dām. After the fall of the dynasty, the fortunes of these pilgrimage centers began to decline under the Abbasids and in the aftermath of the crusades, during the period of the Mamlūks and the Mongol invasions. They have now disappeared completely as such: Sergiopolis, Edessa, Cyrrhus, and even the Monastery of St. Euthymius, which lies in ruins. Only Jerusalem and the *loca sancta* of the Holy Land, notably Bethlehem and Nazareth, remain the pilgrimage centers of *Oriens Christianus Arabicus*. At the foot of Mount Sinai, St. Catherine's still stands but it has declined as a destination for Christian Arab pilgrims, while Rhaithou, the other monastic site in the Sinai Peninsula, has virtually ceased to exist as a pilgrimage center.

IV

THE RITES OF COPTIC PILGRIMS

FRAGMENTS OF THE *SORTES SANCTORUM* FROM THE SHRINE OF ST. COLLUTHUS

Lucia Papini
with an introduction by David Frankfurter

Introduction

David Frankfurter

The shrine of St. Colluthus is one of several known Christian shrines that developed a traditional Egyptian oracle procedure as a primary shrine ritual. Others include shrines of St. Philoxenus and St. Leontius. Devotees would present written queries, worded in both positive and negative form, to the shrine attendant, receiving back the portion of the query that the god—in this case, via the saint—deemed correct. The fascinating evidence for this procedure's continuity from the New Kingdom through the Byzantine period includes matched pairs of queries—"That I should get the banking business", "That I should not get the banking business"—on practical matters, often appealing to the god of a particular shrine: Horus-of-the-Camp in New Kingdom El-Hiba, Soknopaiou in Ptolemaic Soknopaiou Nesos, and Saint Philoxenus in Byzantine Oxyrhynchus.[1]

Sortes books evolved during the Roman period as a hybrid of this "ticket" oracle. The early books (III century CE), presented under the aegis of the legendary Egyptian sage Astrampsychos, addressed approximately one hundred questions typical of the concerns of late antique folk—from business and travel anxieties to health and conception—and scattered among some hundred columns ten possible answers to each question. A client, bringing her question to an "oracle-monger"—we have reason to place this figure among the ranks of the Egyptian priesthood—would think of a number from one to ten. The oracle-monger would add this number to the number assigned to the particular question asked and then, on the basis of the sum, would find the appropriate answer in the numbered columns of the *Sortes* book. Thus, in a rite reminiscent of divinatory uses of Homer and Christian scripture, the sacred book itself, rather than the god in its shrine, could produce oracular pronouncements on pragmatic issues. Numerous fragments of the *Sortes Astrampsychi* have been edited, and the phenomenon of the book's popularity in the third through fifth centuries has suggested to some scholars that the *Sortes* developed as a delocalized, book-centered alternative to traditional oracles at shrines. As the *Sortes* books evolved in Hellenistic and Christian cultures they assumed the mantles of authorities besides Astrampsychos: Mediterranean gods in one late antique version, biblical patriarchs in a medieval version, and the Christian saints in the *Sortes Sanctorum.*[2]

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[1] See especially Arietta Papaconstantinou, "Oracles chrétiens dans l'Égypte byzantine: Le témoignage des papyrus," *ZPE* 104 (1994):281–66, with some examples in Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco 1994), 52–55, 125 (= ##30–35, 66). On the origins and development of the procedure in Egypt see W. Erichsen, *Demotische Orakelfragen* (Copenhagen 1942); W. Schubart, "Orakelfragen," *ZÄS* 67 (1931):110–15; Jaroslav Černý, "Egyptian Oracles," in Richard A. Parker, *A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes in the Brooklyn Museum* (Providence, RI 1962), 35–48; A.G. McDowell, *Jurisdiction in the Workmen's Community of Deir El-Medina* (Leiden 1990), chap. 4; and Kim Ryholt's publication of a New Kingdom version: "A Pair of Oracle Petitions Addressed to Horus-of-the-Camp," *JEA* 79 (1993):189–98.

What makes Papini's *Sortes* fragments particularly significant is their discovery in the same site as the more widely-known oracle-questions delivered to St. Colluthus. The archaeological coincidence of these different oracle materials must in turn reflect the historical coincidence of two different divination practices at the living pilgrimage shrine of St. Colluthus. Indeed, Palladius's *Lausiac History* informs us that dream-incubation took place there as well, and Coptic sources allude to healings by this means.[3] The cult of St. Colluthus seems to have begun as a predominately local cult in Antinoë—the martyr as patron saint and object of diverse appeals. However, the shrine's reputation for healing increased over the Byzantine period; and by the Arab period one finds a monastery of St. Colluthus at Asyut, with its own relics, as well as multiple shrines to the saint throughout Egypt.[4] The ingenuity of the personnel—the priests—at the original shrine in synthesizing (and reviving) ritual practices doubtless lies behind the expansion of the shrine's catchment area and the multiplication of shrines. At St. Colluthus's sanctuary people found familiar rites of divination and of sacred mediation. The use of the *Sortes Sanctorum* alongside the ticket oracle at Antinoë is now direct evidence for this ingenuity, showing both the eclecticism of local ecclesiastical personnel in Coptic Christianity and the dynamic ways in which *texts* might be used and ritualized in a culture of predominately non-literate devotees.

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[2] On the literary evolution of the ticket-oracle procedure in divination texts, see Gerald M. Browne "The Sortes Astrampsychi and the Egyptian Oracle," *Texte und Textkritik: Eine Aufsatzsammlung*, TU 133, ed. by Jürgen Dummer (Berlin 1987), 67–71. The critical edition is Gerald M. Browne, *Sortes Astrampsychi* 1 (Leipzig 1983). See also Browne's historical studies: "The Composition of the *Sortes Astrampsychi*," *BICS* 17 (1970):95–100; "The Origin and Date of the *Sortes Astrampsychi*," *ICS* 1 (1974):53–58; Karl Strobel, "Soziale Wirklichkeit und irrationales Weltverstehen in der Kaiserzeit, I. Sortes Astrampsychi und Sortes Sangellenses," *Laverna* 3 (1992):129–41; and David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt* (Princeton 1998), §§ 4.4.1, 3. On the implications of the *Sortes* for the influence of Greco-Roman writing culture see also Mary Beard, "Writing and Religion: *Ancient Literacy* and the Function of the Written Word in Roman Religion," *Literacy in the Roman World*, *JRA* Supp. 3 (Ann Arbor 1991), 35–58, although see now Jacqueline Champeaux, "De la parole à l'écriture: essai sur le langage des oracles," *Oracles et prophéties dans l'antiquité*, ed. by Jean-Georges Heintz (Paris 1997), 405–38. *Sortes* organized by gods: P. Lugduno-Batavia, inv. 573v, ed. F.A.J. Hoogendijk and P. Van Minnen, *Papyri, Ostraca, Parchments and Waxed Tablets in the Leiden Papyrological Institute*, P. Lugd.-Bat. 25 (Leiden 1991), 15–22. *Sortes* organized by patriarchs: T.C. Keat, "An Early Mediaeval 'Book of Fate': The Sortes XII Patriarcharum," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 3 (1954):41–54. An example of the Coptic *Sortes Sanctorum* can be found in Meyer and Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic*, 251–56 (#126).

FRAGMENTS OF THE *SORTES SANCTORUM*

Lucia Papini

The following two fragments of a parchment codex come from the excavations that the Papyrological Institute "Girolamo Vitelli" of Florence made in Antinoe in 1937. During the same excavations eight papyri containing oracular questions in Coptic were found: S. Donadoni published three of them.[5] During the following excavations, until today, in the site of a church (built at the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth century)[6] and its contiguous buildings (maybe a monastery), other similar documents have been found: about seventy oracular questions in Coptic and two in Greek.[7] During the Second International Congress of Coptic Studies in Rome in 1980 I gave an account of this little but important archive, presenting a first transcription of six documents, as an example.[8] For the most part the oracular questions coming from Antinoë are directed to St. Colluthus, doctor and martyr, who was the patron saint of the town. The discovering of oracular questions in the ground of the church allows the hypothesis that the church was consecrated to the worship of St. Colluthus. And we can imagine that devotees of St. Colluthus came on a pilgrimage to this shrine to pray to the saint and obtain his intercession towards God. Here pilgrims would find priests who would write oracular questions for them. It is to this environment, in which divination had special importance, that these Coptic fragments of the *Sortes Sanctorum* must be attributed.

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[3] Palladius, *Lausiac History*, 60. Healings by incubation collected in Paul Devos, "Autres miracles coptes de Saint Kolouthos," *AnBoll* 99 (1981):285–301. The *Martyrdom of St. Colluthus* introduces the saint as "physician and healer" (Pierpont Morgan Codex M591 T.28, p. 88v, i, ed. E.A.E. Reymond and J.W.B. Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices* [Oxford 1973], 145).

[4] See Pierre Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient: Histoire et géographie, des origines à la conquête arabe* (Paris 1985), 325–26. I am especially grateful to Jennifer Hevelone-Harper for sharing her unpublished work on the Colluthus cult.

[5] S. Donadoni, "Una domanda oracolare cristiana da Antinoe," *Rivista di Studi Orientali* 29 (1954):183–186, and "Due testi oracolari copti," *Synteleia Arangio Ruiz* I (Napoli 1964), 286–289.

[6] M. Manfredi, "Scavi in Egitto," *Atene e Roma* n.s. 11 (1966):191–192; P. Grossmann,

The parchment is a palimpsest. Of the former text (in Coptic) we can see only feeble traces of letters in a capital style, which were written in the opposite direction in respect of the following text, and, on the flesh side, the lines which were necessary to arrange the writing. The greater fragment (15.5 · 8 cm), which now is formed by two pages with a central fold, had been formerly been used as a single page. Each of the two pages contains a written column, which is 5 cm wide. The upper margin is 1.5 cm wide, the outer one 1.5 cm as well, and the margin along the seam 1 cm. The lower part of the sheet is missing, and so it is impossible to know the length of the column, nor does the text (as we shall see) inform us on this dimension. In the right half (II) of the hair side (B) the text ends with a short sentence, closed among two lines made with dashes: a blank space seems to follow, but unfortunately here the parchment is broken.

The other, smaller fragment (6.5 · 4.5 cm) contains, on the hair side, the beginning (and on the flesh side the end) of a few lines. It is the lower corner of a column—the inside part along the seam.

"Zur christlichen Baukunst in Agypten," *Enchoria* 8 (1978):135–136, ascribes the church to the fourth century.

[7] L. Papini, "Due biglietti oracolari cristiani," *Trenta testi greci da papiri letterari e documentari editi in occasione del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Florence 1983), 68–70.

[8] L. Papini, "Biglietti oracolari in copto dalla necropoli Nord di Antinoe," *Acts of the Second International Congress of Coptis Studies* (Rome 1985), 245–255.

The two margins, the lower one and the inside one, are preserved as well. On the hair side (B) the page ends with two lines of dashes, which, as in fragment 1, delimit two written lines. If these short sentences (that, as we shall see, are oracular answers) closed every page,[9] then we could reconstruct the height of fragment 1. But we see that on the flesh side (A) of fragment 2 the column does not end in the same way; thus it is impossible to expect the same height. It is possible that the blank space in B II of fragment 1 was an interval marking the beginning of a new text. At the beginning of the left page (I), whether on the hair side or on the flesh side, in the outer margin there is a paragraph sign, which probably marked the beginning of a passage. Pages are not numbered. Sentences are divided by a point placed in the middle of the line.

The writing is in an Alexandrian capital style with alternating form, and may be assigned to the beginning of the seventh century.[10] For a paleographical comparison one might compare P. Vindob. G 26744 (VI/VII-centuries) and P. Louvre E 10295 (mid-VII).[11] It seems probable that the parchment may be placed between these two dates, even if maybe it resembles more the former papyrus. The difference between wide and narrow letters is not overly emphasized, as happens in late specimens in which the writing rule is crystallized. On the other hand, a feature rare in early documents is present in our fragments: apices adorns the "horns" of *upsilon*, the oblique lines of *lambda* and *janjia*, and the left end of the horizontal line in *tau* and *pi*, and a button-like mark adorns the lower part of vertical lines.

The parchment contains passages of *Sortes Sanctorum* in Coptic. A. Van Lantschoot, in his edition of a papyrus codex in the Vatican Library that also contains the *Sortes Sanctorum* in Coptic (P. Vaticano Copto 1),[12] discussed two similar texts, P. Berlin 11914[13] and "ms Antinoe copte 22 de l'Institut papyrologique de Florence". The Berlin papyrus contains passages from John's gospel in Greek, followed by bilingual *hermēneiai*, in Greek and Coptic. K. Treu, in his edition of P. Berol 21315, listed all extant examples of this kind of text and discussed its nature.[14] The specimens so far conserved give passages of John's gospel in Greek,[15] each followed by a short sentence—the oracular answer—in Greek or in Coptic. In contrast, the Vatican Library's fragments present a succession of numbered sentences, mostly very short. They are not based upon a specific religious text; instead, they are oracular answers. The Florence parchment is very similar to P. Berlin 11914: the text is formed by a sequence of passages, whose length is difficult to ascertain, since its columns are not complete. In two cases the text is followed by a very short sentence (one line or two), which is presented in two series of wavy short lines, forming one broken line. But in contrast to P. Berlin 11914, these short sentences lack the word *hermēneia*, or anything similarly indicating the sentences' oracular meaning.[16] The text itself comes neither from the Old nor the New Testament, and yet the sentences do have religious meaning. Their common features include verbs expressed in the second singular masculine and often promises of God's help and the anticipation of happy results. These features are peculiar to oracular answers,[17] suggesting that this may be a case in which a long oracular answer is followed by a short sentence that resumes its oracular meaning.[18] The comparison of the text with the Vatican Library's papyrus is interesting: some sentences are present either in the Vatican Library's papyrus or in the Florence parchment too, despite some variations. It is necessary to remember that the Vatican Library's codex is ascribed by Van Lantschoot to the seventh or eighth centuries, considerably later than the Florentine parchment.

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[9] Cf. the Berlin papyri published by O. Stegmüller, "Zu den Bibelorakeln im Codex Bezae," *Bib* 34 (1953):13–22.

[10] See G. Cavallo, "*Grammata Alexandrina*," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 24 (1975):38–40.

[11] Cf. Cavallo, "*Grammata Alexandrina*," 47 and plates 11, 13.

[12] Van Lantschoot, "Une collection sahidique de 'Sortes Sanctorum'," *Le Muséon* 69 (1956):35–52.

[13] Published, together with P. Berlin 3607 and P. Berlin 3623, by O. Stegmüller, *Bib* 34 (1953).

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[14] K. Treu, "PBerol 21315: Bibelorakeln mit griechischer und koptischer Hermeneia," *Archiv* 37 (1991):55–60.

[15] The only known exception so far is Paris Bibl. Nat Copt. 156, in which *hermēneiai* in Coptic and in Greek follow passages of John's gospel in Sahidic: see H. Quecke, "Zu den Joh-Fragmenten mit 'Hermeneiai'," *Orientalia* 40 (1974):407–414, previously published by W.E. Crum, "Two coptic papyri from Antinoe," *PSBA* 26 (1904):174–176. This fragment of John forms fragment K of the New Testament's edition published in *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect*, ed. by G. Horner (1911–24).

[16] See P. Canart and R. Pintaudi, "PSI XVII Congr. 5: Un système d'oracles chrétiens ('Sortes Sanctorum')," *ZPE* 57 (1984):85–90.

[17] Cf. e.g. the answers of Sortes Astrampsychi, in P.Oxy 2832 and 2833.

[18] A similar case can be found in a specimen of Sortes Apostolorum in Syriac, published by G. Furlani, "Una recensione siriaca delle Sortes apostolorum," *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto di Scienze* ... 82/2 (1922–23), 357–363; cf. Canart and Pintaudi, "Un système d'oracles chrétiens," 86.

Fragment 1

A I ⲧⲡⲓⲥⲧⲓⲥ ⲉⲧϩⲙ̣̅
ⲡⲉⲕϩⲏⲧ ⲙ̅ⲡⲣ̅
ⲕⲁⲁⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ · ⲟⲩⲛ
ⲡⲕ̅ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ
ⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ⲃⲟⲏⲑⲟⲥ
ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟϥ ⲡⲉⲧ
ⲛⲁⲣ̅ϩⲩⲙⲉ ⲙⲙⲟⲕ
ϩⲛ̅ⲧⲉϩⲓⲏ ⲉⲧⲕ̅
ⲛ]ⲁ̣ⲃⲱⲕ ⲛ̅ϩⲏⲧⲥ
]ⲓ̣ⲟⲛ ⲙ̅ⲡⲣ̅ⲧⲓⲥ
]ϫⲉ ⲙⲛ̅ⲗⲁ
- - - - - -

… the faith which is in your heart, don’t give it up; your God is the one who helps you, and moreover, He is the one who will guide you along the way in which you will walk …

1–5 Cf. PVaticano Copto 1 sentence n. 53: ⲧⲡⲓⲥ]ⲧⲓⲥ ⲉⲧϩⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲕ ϩⲏ[ⲧ ⲙⲡ]ⲣⲕⲁⲁⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲟⲩⲛⲧⲁ[ⲕ ⲙⲙ]ⲁⲩ ⲛⲟⲩⲃⲟⲏⲑⲟⲥ.
6–7 ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲣ̅ϩⲩⲙⲉ: about ϩⲩⲙⲉ cf. ϩⲙⲙⲉ/ϩⲉⲙⲓ that, preceded by (ⲉ)ⲣ means “to guide”.
8–9 Cf. PVaticano Copto 1 n. 48: ϩⲛ̅ⲧⲉϩⲓⲏ ⲉⲧⲕ̅[ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ] ⲛ̅ϩⲏⲧ̅ⲥ̅.

A II ⲙ̅ⲙⲓⲛ ⲙⲙⲟⲕ ⲡⲉⲧ
ⲟ̅ⲛ̅ ⲁⲧⲥⲱⲧⲙ̅ · ⲁⲩⲱ
ⲕⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲣⲡ
ⲛ̅ⲗⲩⲡⲏ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲥⲧⲁ
ϩⲟⲕ · ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩ
ⲧⲉ ⲧⲟⲩϫⲟⲕ ⲛ̅ϩⲏ̣
ⲁϥⲭⲁⲣⲓⲍⲉ ⲛⲁⲕ · [
ⲡⲓⲥⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲩϫ̣[
ⲕ ·[
– - - - - -

… you that are not obedient; and you know the first pain that strikes you; and God has saved you and forgiven you …

3–5 Cf. PVaticano Copto 1 n. 46: ⲟⲩⲛϩⲉⲛ ⲡⲉⲑⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ[ⲁ]ⲧⲁϩⲟⲕ ⲛ̅ⲅ[ⲥⲟ]ⲟⲩⲛ; n. 50: ⲛⲧⲁ[ϥⲧⲁ]ϩⲟⲕ; the occurrence of the verb ⲧⲁϩⲟ is very frequent in PVaticano Copto 1, even if in different sentences.
6 ⲧⲟⲩϫⲟⲕ: cf. PVaticano Copto 1 n. 39: ⲛ ⲧⲟ[ⲩϫⲟⲕ; n. 67: ⲛ ⲧⲟⲩϫⲟ[ⲕ.
6–7 ⲛϩⲏ: l. ⲛϩⲉ. Cf. Romans 8, 32: ⲛϩⲉ ⲛϥ̅ⲛⲁⲭⲁⲣⲓ̣ⲍⲉ.

B I

ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲅ̄ⲃⲱⲕ
ϩⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲥⲟⲟⲩⲧⲛ̄
ϫⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧ
ⲙⲓϣⲉ ⲉϫⲱⲕ ·
5 ⲁⲩⲱ ϥⲛⲁⲧⲩⲉ
ⲛ̣ⲉⲕϫⲁϫⲉ ϩⲩ̣
].ⲟⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉ ⲛⲁⲕ
] . . . ⲕ
- - - - -

... walk and go without delay, because God is the one who fights for you and will remove your enemies ...

1 ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ: cf. PVaticano Copto 1 n. 33.
2 ϩⲛⲟⲩⲥⲟⲟⲩⲧⲛ: cf. PVaticano Copto 1 n. 54.
3–5 Cf. PVaticano Copto 1 n. 51: ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲙⲓϣⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ϥⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲟ[ⲕ.
5 For ϥⲛⲁⲧⲩⲉ cf. ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲟ "to remove": here this meaning seems to be the most proper; in other sentences of PVaticano Copto 1 the same verb has the other possible meaning of "to reward".
7 Perhaps ⲁⲡⲟⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉ.

B II

ⲧⲁⲥⲧⲁϩⲟⲕ ϫⲉ
ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧ
ⲙⲓϣⲉ ⲉϫⲱⲕ · ⲁⲩⲱ
ϥⲛⲁⲧⲱⲱⲃⲉ ⲛ[ⲁⲕ
5 ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲁⲓⲧⲁⲓⲙⲁ
ϩⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲥⲟⲟⲩⲧⲛ̄
~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~
ⲃⲱⲕ ϩⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ̣[
~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

... it happened to you, because God is the one who fights for you and will grant for you your request without delay. Go ...

1 ⲧⲁⲥⲧⲁϩⲟⲕ: cf. A II 4–5.
1–3 Cf. B I 2–3.
4 ϥⲛⲁⲧⲱⲱⲃⲉ: like ⲧⲟⲩⲉⲓⲟ (cf. B I 5) it has two meanings, "to remove" and "to grant"; here the second seems to be more suitable.
5 ⲁⲓⲧⲁⲓⲙⲁ: Grk αἴτημα; cf. Psalm 19:6 πληρώσαι κύριος πάντα τὰ αἰτήματά σου.
7 ϩⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉ: it doesn't seem possible to read ϩⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲥⲟⲟⲩⲧⲛ̄, even if the meaning would be suitable (cf. B I 1–2).

FRAGMENT 2

A - - - - - -

] . .
] ⲉⲛⲟⲩ
] .ⲕ̅ⲛ̅
ⲡ]ⲉⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲙ̅
[ⲕⲁϩ ⲧⲉⲕⲉⲡϣⲟ
]ⲉⲛ̅ⲛ̅ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ·
]ⲣⲧ[ⲉ]ⲕϭⲟⲙ ⲡ . .
]ⲡ ⲙ̅ⲡⲕ̅ⲉϣ
] . ⲱⲃⲉⲣⲁ . .

3 Cf. PVaticano Copto 1 n. 65: ⲕⲁⲧⲁ] ⲡⲉⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ . .

B - - - - -

ⲛϣ[
ⲡⲁ . [
ⲡⲟ.[ϩⲛ̅ⲟⲩ
ⲥⲟⲟⲩⲧⲛ ⲁⲛ̣[
˜ ˜ ˜ ˜ ˜ ˜
ⲕⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̣̅ . . . [
ⲡⲟ̣ⲥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲣ̣[.]ⲙ. [
˜ ˜ ˜ ˜ ˜ ˜

3–4 Cf. B I 2 and B II 6.
5 ⲕⲛⲁϫⲓ: cf. PVaticano Copto 1 n. 32.

CHANT IN COPTIC PILGRIMAGE[1]

L.S.B. MacCoull

As one might expect, music played a part in the events that took place at pilgrimage shrines in Christian Egypt. Hymns in praise of the saint of the place were sung by pilgrims and caretakers; processions around the site were accompanied by chanting; and religious services conducted at the sanctuary of course had their musical component. Unfortunately, Coptic chant is the only musical tradition of the Christian East that has no conventions of written notation.[2] We can have no Coptic counterparts of the chant monuments written down for such Western pilgrimage shrines as Compostela. All we can do is collect references to music and chant from narrative accounts. Such a procedure can nonetheless be useful for reconstructing the kinds of musical observances associated with pilgrimage and the attitudes toward religious music in Christian Egypt as circumstances changed through time, from those of an independent church to those of a subjugated religio-ethnic group.

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[1] I should like to thank Dr Patrick Jacobson, conductor of the Washington Capella Antiqua; Professor Wallace Rave of Arizona State University; and Professor Emeritus Miloš Velimirović of the University of Virginia for their helpful comments during the preparation of this paper.

[2] I. Borsai, "Coptic rite, music of the," in *New Grove* 4:730–734; cf. P. Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology in the Study of Gregorian Chant* (Chicago 1992), 56–57, 103–110, 122. An exception, according to some scholars, might be the markings in Rylands 25–29 (W.E. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* [Manchester 1903], pp. 9–11), which are hymns, and Leiden Insinger 41 (W. Pleyte, P.A.A. Boeser, *Manuscrits coptes du Musée d'antiquités des Pays-Bas à Leide* [Leiden 1897], 229–232), which are Psalms. Some have tried to understand these marks (see Rylands Plate 2) as attempted forms of ekphonetic notation or pointing which died out. Now see also D. Jourdan-Hemmerdinger, "Nouveaux fragments musicaux sur papyrus," *Studies in Eastern Chant* 4 (1979):81–111 esp. 84–89, 91–102, where the author interprets the dots in the Psalm texts of the (?5th-c.) *P.Lond.Lit.* 207 as ekphonetic pointing. The Rylands MSS are in Greek and date from after the Arab conquest of Egypt (cf. below, n. 16); the Leiden Psalter text is bilingual in Greek and Coptic. It is unclear if the post-451 examples come from non-Chalcedonian or Chalcedonian origins. Whether or not the circular shapes in the so-called "Gulezyan manuscripts" represent a form of attempted musical notation is still very much debated: see M. Robertson, "Gulezyan manuscripts: possible

We know that in the late sixth and early seventh centuries chant played a part in the life of Egyptian monasteries of all sizes.[3] Daily psalmody was participated in by all members of the community, and both memorization and reading of written liturgical materials were encouraged.[4] When such large monasteries as Pachomius's house at Pbow and Shenoute's at Atripe (Panopolis, Akhmim) became goals of pilgrims who visited to honor the saintly founders and ask for divine favors through their intercession at their burial sites, such visitors experienced the musical life of the house in its worship and praised the founder by singing a hymn addressed to him.[5]

By the ninth century under Arab rule, pilgrimage to Shenoute's monastery had become a major phenomenon.[6] Pilgrims would move in procession around various sites while singing, and then chant the appointed texts at the different stations. Leiden MS Insinger 34 fols. 95–98[7] preserves what is termed Fragment G of a Typikon of Shenoute's monastery,[8] spelling out what liturgical observances are to be performed on the occasion of a visit to the monastery by a nobleman or official (**ⲁⲝⲓⲱⲙⲁⲧⲓⲕⲟⲥ**), or the duke (**ⲇⲟⲩⲝ**), or *archon*s (magistrates) and *hegemon*s (lit. "prefects"), or "some rich men." Visits by superiors of other religious houses, with monks or priests of theirs, are also envisaged: fol. 97 has the rubrics "For some fathers of

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remnants of ancient Coptic musical notation?," in D.W. Johnson, ed., *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies* 2 (Rome 1993), 355–367.

[3] See R. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in the Christian East* (Collegeville 1986), 249–259.

[4] CO 29–31, 34–35, 39. Unfortunately there are no references to "reading" of any form of notation; presumably cantillation and chant were taught orally by a master.

[5] Such as we have in the much later examples collected by S. Gaselee, "Hymni duo de Sinuthio," *Le Muséon* 33 (1915):116–118, and the ninth-century example from MS Morgan M574 published by K.H. Kuhn and W.J. Tait, *Thirteen Coptic Acrostic Hymns* (Oxford 1996), 136–145. A stock strophe is used in hymns for pilgrimage sites: "All the people / gather at your *topos* / to receive your blessing / from your holy body [relic]." DeL. O'Leary, *The Difnar (Antiphonarion) of the Coptic Church*, fasc. 2 (London 1927), 53.

[6] See J. Timbie, "The relics of Apa Shenoute and the use of ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ in BN Copte 68," in L.S.B. MacCoull, ed., *Studies in the Christian East in Memory of Mirrit Boutros Ghali* (Washington 1995), 89–93.

[7] Ed. Pleyte-Boeser, pp. 157–163. See also the mention by U. Zanetti, "Un chant de bienvenue à Skété," in *Eulogema: Studies in Honor of R.F. Taft SJ* (Rome 1993), 594 with n. 6.

[8] S. Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus* (New Haven 1993), 742; cf. the remarks in U. Zanetti, "Bohairic liturgical manuscripts," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 61 (1995): 68; and see now *idem*, "Un index liturgique du Monastère Blanc," in *Christianisme d'Egypte: Hommages à René-Georges Coquin* (Paris-Louvain 1995), 55–75, here esp. 55.

communities, if they come to us with their monks" (line 5) and "If some priests, either by themselves or together with some fathers of communities, come to us" (lines 22–23). In each case the liturgical selections for the gradual (προκείμενον),[9] Psalm verses, Acts reading (ⲡⲣⲁⲝⲓⲥ), Pauline epistle, Gospel, and homily (usually a discourse [ⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ] of Shenoute) are carefully chosen to speak to the condition of the visitor. Rulers and officials get Paul the "wise master-builder," "I am for peace" from Ps. 121, "Kings of the earth, princes and judges" from Ps. 148, and "The kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents . . ." from Ps. 71. Rich men get "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord" from Ps. 23, and a discourse of Shenoute beginning "If I say that you love me."[10] Monastic superiors get "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" from Ps. 132, "For my brethren and companions' sakes I will wish thee prosperity" from Ps. 121, "Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" from Matthew, and a Shenoute discourse with incipit "Believe, O brothers, what I shall say."[11] Unfortunately, none of the Psalm citations bears any kind of indication of to what "tone" or in what "mode" (problematic terms, to be returned to below) it is to be sung.

This source (and its non-pilgrimage counterpart published by Zanetti, "Index liturgique") is as late as the ninth century, and it remains difficult to reconstruct what may have been the case in pre-conquest Late Antiquity. If the original of what are transmitted as the *Canons of Athanasius* did indeed go back to a Greek text of the fifth century,[12] we may have an early reference to modes and their use in section 98, where learning "the order of the singing-tones" is referred to.[13] In the narrative accounts by Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem (ca. 600) of pilgrimages to the healing shrine of Sts. Cyrus and John at Menouthis outside Alexandria, we find references to pilgrims singing the Psalms, especially Psalms regarded as having curative value or reinforcing the curative powers of the shrine's saints.[14] Somewhat later (just after 700) is the comparable reference, in George, Bishop of the Arabs' sermon on Severus of Antioch, to "all the varieties of pitch (*qwmta*) and tone (*qynta*)."[15] Where we do find indications of ἦχος in MSS originating in Egypt is occasionally with the Greek troparia that survive on papyri (and parchments) from ca. 700.[16] If the eight-mode system was indeed taking shape just before, or at about the same time as, the Arab conquest cut Egypt and Syria-Palestine off from Byzantium,[17] early indications of this sort of thing might be expected to be spotty.

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[9] On this term see D. Hiley, *Western Plainchant: A Handbook* (Oxford-New York 1993), 495–496; Zanetti, "Bohairic liturgical manuscripts," 74 n. 25 (Shenoute's monastery MSS are of course in Sahidic); *idem*, "Index liturgique," 57, 59 with n. 6, and elsewhere.

[10] Emmel, pp. 747, 984.

[11] Emmel, p. 749 (inc. 36).

[12] The fragmentary Coptic text being in a 6th- to 7th c. papyrus: ed. W.E. Crum and W. Riedel, *The Canons of Athanasius* (London 1904), 62–64. The text of the later Arabic version, made in the 11th c. by Michael of Tinnis, is taken principally from a 14th c. Berlin MS.

[13] Unfortunately the Arabic word translated "singing-tones" is corrupt here. MS R (Berlin) reads *khîwât*; M (the so-called Macarius collection, see Crum-Riedel, pp. xxviii–xxix) have *khwât*; the editor conjectures *khânât*. How nun can be read for waw is unclear.

For Egypt itself the evidence is so late as to be dispiriting, but it has to be confronted. In her paper "Y a-t-il un 'octoéchos' dans le système du chant copte?"[18] the late I. Borsai discussed the account of church modes given by the early fourteenth-century Arabophone Coptic writer Abu 'l-Barakat ibn Kabar in his religious encyclopaedia "The Lamp of Darkness."[19] What Ibn Kabar calls the fourth mode is used, he says, for the feasts commemorating martyrs, since it is of such an ethos as to strengthen the heart and encourage the suffering to bear up under adversity.[20] (By his time the Arabophone writer is both using the Greek loanword ἦχος and rendering it by the Arabic *lahn*, "melody," the latter a technical term in Arabic music that is narrower in connotation than ἦχος which is conceived of as meaning, more restrictedly, a type of scale, and, more widely, a melodic type, a grouped set of musical formulae.)[21] This may be a clue, however late, to the sort of thing that went on at Coptic pilgrimage shrines involving martyrs' tombs.

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[14] N. Fernández Marcos, *Los Thaumata de Sofronio* (Madrid 1975), 35–37, 389–391. See now also H. Brakmann, "Die Kopten—Kirche Jesu Christi in Ägypten," in *idem* and A. Gerhards, eds., *Die Koptische Kirche: Einführung in das ägyptische Christentum* (Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln 1994), 11, 199 n. 21 with the literature there cited; and C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity* (Baltimore 1997), 169, 213–214, 309, cf. 262, 266–267.

[15] K. McVey, ed., *George, Bishop of the Arabs: Memra on Severus*, [CSCO] 530 (Leuven 1993), p. 40, line 970. The writer does not mention whether these varieties are thought of as corresponding to different occasions, temperaments, elements and so on, as in what became the later system.

[16] A very clear example is *P.Ryl.* III 466, two Greek troparia on the 8th and 9th Odes possibly from a kanon in honor of St. Theodore; the text is plainly headed "1st plagal" (see Plate 1).

[17] D.E. Conomos in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York 1991), 2:1386.

[18] In *Studia Aegyptiaca: Recueil V. Wessetzky* (Budapest 1974), 39–53.

[19] This portion translated by L. Villecourt in *Le Muséon* 36 (1922):262–263. There is no critical edition of the complete Arabic text of this work.

[20] Borsai, "'Octoéchos'," 40.

To return to Shenoute's monastery as a pilgrimage goal, it inspired visits not only to the founder, Shenoute, but also to the assemblage of local saints who came from that monastery. Several of the Leiden Insinger MSS, as well as fragments from Vienna and Paris, show that Shenoute's monastery observed a yearly festal calendar of its own, especially favoring monastic saints who came from the Shenoutean community and/or had particular ties to the Akhmim region.[22] Each of these saints' days also had its own prescribed antiphons, psalmody, hymns, and readings. Examples are abundant. Phaophi 18 commemorated Victor and Theophilus of Tabennisi, who travelled with Shenoute to the Council of Ephesus, with "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen" from Ps. 44[23] (probably a reference to the legendary story of Shenoute's confrontation with the empress Pulcheria[24]). Phaophi 24 was the feast of Apa Charisios the archimandrite, with "Grace (*charis*) is shed abroad in thy lips" from Ps. 44, a pun on the saint's name.[25] Choiak 9 commemorated Apa Pamin the anchorite,[26] with "The just man shall flourish like a palm tree" from Ps. 91 and "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance" from Ps. 111. Choiak 10[27] was the feast of Apa Joore of Akhmim,[28] with "He chose David ... and took him from the sheepfolds" from Ps. 78. In Mecheir fell the feasts of Apa Bishoi who was received into the community by Shenoute, with "He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children" from Ps. 77;[29] and of Apa Zenobios the archimandrite,[30] with "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee" from Ps. 144.[31] (All the Psalm verses in these Shenoute's monastery texts are given in Sahidic Coptic, not Greek. Again, there is no pointing.) Apa Sabinos is commemorated, on a date not preserved, with readings of two discourses of Shenoute,[32] incipits "Listen to the judgement"[33] and "I have been reading in the holy Gospels."[34]

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[21] Borsai, "'Octoéchos'," 48 n. 7 differentiates among Western "mode," Byzantine ἦχος, and Coptic ἦχος/*lahn*/ⲟⲩⲱϩⲙ.

[22] The typikon reconstructed from Vienna, Paris and Leiden MSS by Zanetti, "Index liturgique," is just such a calendar, covering Thoth through Pachon and Pentecost (with lacunae), giving the readings. For another local calendar, from the sixth century, cf. A. Papaconstantinou, "La liturgie stationale à Oxyrhynchos dans la première moitié du 6e siècle. Réédition et commentaire du *P.Oxy.* XI 1357," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 54 (1996):135–159.

[23] Insinger 39, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 215 line 20.

[24] *Besa: The Life of Shenoute*, trans. D. Bell (Kalamazoo 1983), 16–18, and 78–79 (secs. 128–129).

[25] Insinger 38, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 182 line 8.

[26] Insinger 33, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 145 line 8; also Vienna K 9732, in Zanetti, "Index liturgique," 62, also giving Ps. 111 (and here Ps. 36:23).

[27] Or Choiak 15, as in Zanetti, "Index liturgique," 62 with n. 15, giving different readings.

[28] Insinger 33, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 146 line 33.

It appears that also the feast of St. Antony the Great, father of Egyptian monks (Tybi 22), was a major event at Shenoute's monastery.[35] For his celebration readings are prescribed from Hebrews 11 ("Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions"),[36] and numerous Psalm antiphons including "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments" from Ps. 111,[37] and "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" from Ps. 23(:3).[38] This occasion probably drew large crowds of pilgrims to join in the liturgy.

We have seen from Shenoute's monastery typika that three kinds of texts involved pilgrimage participants in chant performance: Biblical "prose" (so to speak), Psalms (originally Hebrew poetry), and hymns (usually strophic). The prose texts would have been cantillated with expressive effects, the Psalms chanted (probably antiphonally), and the hymnody sung. Let us take just one example from a known

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[29] Insinger 38b–e, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 195 line 27; or in Vienna K 9731, Zanetti, "Index liturgique," 66–67 with n. 46, giving different readings.

[30] Probably abbot of Shenoute's monastery after Shenoute's successor Besa: see D.W. Johnson, "The dossier of Apa Zenobius," *Orientalia* 58 (1989):193–212; cf. *idem*, "Anti-Chalcedonian polemics in Coptic texts, 451–641," p. 232 in B.E. Pearson, J.E. Goehring, eds., *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia 1986). Zenobios's life was inscribed on the monastery walls: W.E. Crum, "Inscriptions from Shenoute's monastery," [*JTS*] 5 (1904):565–566. He is also listed in Zanetti, "Index liturgique," 67.

[31] Insinger 38b–e, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 195 line 27; cf. from Vienna K 9731 (as in Zanetti, "Index liturgique," 67) giving Ps. 88:2 for the *prokeimenon*.

[32] Insinger 38a, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 185 line 1.

[33] See Emmel's list of incipits from the typika, p. 745 ("T8 [='typ.inc.8'] frg. b").

[34] Emmel, pp. 951–953.

[35] At times combined with Paul of the Desert: Zanetti, "Index liturgique," 66 with n. 41, giving slightly different readings.

[36] Insinger 38b–e, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 190 line 13. The last probably refers to Antony's vision of a diabolical lion during his temptation (*Athanasius: The Life of Antony*, trans. R.C. Gregg [New York 1980], 38).

[37] Insinger 40, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 220 line 13; cf. 38b–e, p. 193 line 16.

[38] Insinger 38b–e, ed. Pleyte-Boeser, p. 190 line 13.

Shenoute's monastery source, the above-mentioned bilingual Psalm texts (MS Insinger 41). The text of this manuscript leaf (paginated 137–138 as we have it) consists, not of entire Psalms, but of selections,[39] given first in Sahidic Coptic (written in red), then in Greek (written in black ink): it was clearly made for liturgical use, not for private reading.[40] As annotated in the Leiden edition, the order of Psalms selected from on just this one page runs (Pss.) 18, 20, 23, 24, 133(:1), 28, 70, 28 again, 16, 22, 133:1 again, 32, 33, 35, 131, 36. While no indications of dates or names of feasts are preserved, this has to be a liturgical selection made to be followed by participants with probably a different level of command of the two languages;[41] some are given in very short form followed by an abbreviation sign, indicating that they could be filled out from memory. Ps. 23:3, prescribed as we have seen as an antiphon for the feast of St. Antony, is given with its first phrase in Coptic, **ⲛ(ⲓⲙ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲃⲱⲕ) ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ**, and then the entire Greek text of 23:3–4a. Here as elsewhere each selection ends with the separating marker **ⲁⲗⲫ/**, seemingly a liturgical direction ("rubric") meaning "which see and verify."[42] The treatment of the texts in this MS probably indicates that the people using it used Coptic as their normal spoken vernacular and were less familiar with Greek, but continued to use Greek on formal liturgical occasions.[43] Noteworthy is the fact that, just as the Rylands troparia with markings are exclusively Greek, so here in the bilingual case only the Greek texts bear what markings there are, not the Coptic.

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[39] Cf. H. Quecke, "Psalmverse als 'Hymnen' in der koptischen Liturgie?," in *Christianisme d'Egypte* (above n. 8) 101–114.

[40] As contrasted with *P.Lond.Lit.* 207, which gives the Psalms in book order. So too were the Leiden, Vienna and Paris typika made for use and actually used: Zanetti, "Index liturgique," 59 with n. 7.

[41] Cf. R. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993), 254 (with n. 131): "... the physical format of our finds reflects real needs. It follows that the lectionary books used in public worship needed to have both Greek and Coptic texts... Given the monastic origin of most surviving manuscripts, in fact, one may say more specifically that this bilingual character must have obtained inside some monasteries."

[42] From ἀλφάδιον, a plumb-line, and its verb ἀλφαδιάζω, to use a plumb-line, attested in later demotic (themselves from the later meaning of ἀλφά(ι)νω as "find"): D. Demetrakos, Μέγα λεξικὸν τῆς Ἑλλενικῆς γλώσσης (Athens 1949), 1:301. (I thank Helen Saradi for exploring this with me.) The term was not understood by Quecke, "Psalmverse als 'Hymnen'," 113–114 with nn. 47 and 49.

[43] On Greek-Sahidic bilingualism see H. Brakmann, "Neue Funde und Forschungen zur Liturgie der Kopten," *Actes IV^e Congrès des Études coptes* (Louvain-la-Neuve 1992) 426–427, and Zanetti, "Bohairic liturgical MSS," 66 with n. 6; in addition, H. Brakmann, "Die Kopten—Kirche Jesu Christi in Ägypten," in *idem* and A. Gerhards, eds., *Die koptische Kirche: Einführung in das ägyptische Christentum* (Stuttgart 1994), 18–19 with the literature cited in notes 107–112, 117 (on pp. 210–211).

Let us proceed to the third of the three categories of pilgrimage chants listed above, that of hymns. Although the vast repertoire of Coptic hymnody as we have it is transmitted in very late manuscripts, many of the compositions must be of considerable antiquity.[44] Pertaining to the feast of the healing saints Cyrus and John, already mentioned,[45] is a hymn that must have come from a pilgrimage context. It runs:

Come, all people,
and let us celebrate in joy
on the blessed commemoration
of the holy martyrs,

the noble athletes
and strong soldiers,
holy gladiators of Christ,
invincible polemarchs,

Apa Cyrus and John,
the powerful contenders,
prime martyrs
who died for our sake.

Come and see the miracles wrought
by their great power
and their firm faith
and their love for God.[46]

Although this text as we have it is incomplete, making no mention of the translation of the martyrs' relics as one might expect, surely it was composed to be sung in procession at the shrine of Abukir (Apa Cyrus).

One could likewise collect the hymns associated with great pilgrimage centers and their feasts: Pachomius at Pbow on 14 Pachon; Menas at his great healing shrine on 15 Payni; Cosmas and Damian

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[44] Sixty years ago O. Burmester wrote that Coptic hymnody is "a vast virgin forest ... whose confines no Coptic or liturgical scholar has as yet penetrated": in "The Turūhāt of the saints," [*BSAC*] 4 (1938):141, quoted by I. Borsai, "Un type mélodique particulier des hymnes coptes du mois de Kiahk," *Studia Musicologica* 13 (1971):74 with n. 7. The present writer is attempting to remedy this situation in a separate study.

[45] See above, n. 14.

[46] O'Leary, *Difnar*, fasc. 3 (London 1929), 27: hymn for 4 Epeiph. The "tune" given is *ēchos Batos*, that of the four-stress quatrain meter of which the pattern-strophe begins *piBatos eta Mōusēs nau erof*, "The Bush that Moses saw."

(under their Monophysite personae) on 22 Payni; Shenoute, of course, on 7 Epeiph,[47] and Apa Bishoi of the Wadi Natrun the following day (note how these cluster in the summer months). Two feasts in particular have generated hymn texts in praise of that particularly Egyptian phenomenon, the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt and their sojourn in the Hermopolite nome. On 24 Pachon the Coptic church celebrates the traditional date of Christ's entry into Egypt. The pilgrims to Hermopolis's basilica sang:

> Christ Jesus our Lord
> came to the land of Egypt
> with Mary his virgin mother
> and the elderly Joseph the carpenter,
>
> at the time when Herod the king
> was pursuing him
> wishing to seize him
> and kill him with a sword.
>
> And those shameful things,
> demons and idols
> and defiled things made with hands
> in the land of the Egyptians,
>
> our good Saviour trampled down
> all together
> and set up in their place
> a holy pillar.[48]

—the last clearly referring to a pilgrimage monument of some kind. Even more important was (and is) the pilgrimage center of Koskam[49] marking the Holy Family's house, later miraculously consecrated as the first church in Egypt (if not in all Christendom). For its feast on 6 Hathyr there has been transmitted the following hymn text:

> Let us sing to the Lord God
> in fear and trembling,
> and let us glorify him in good will
> because of his mercy toward us.

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[47] Compare the pilgrimage-goal reference in the Shenoute hymn in Kuhn and Tait, *Coptic Acrostic Hymns*, 142–143: "... he [Shenoute] laid the foundation of the church. // All men upon earth, / when they come to your monastery, / marvel at that stone, / for there is no mark on it." Clearly this was a monument shown to pilgrims.

[48] O'Leary, *Difnar*, fasc. 3:10–11.

[49] See most recently L.S.B. MacCoull, "Holy Family pilgrimage in late antique Egypt: the case of Qosqam," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Ergänzungsband* 20 (1995):987–992.

He gathered on this day
which is the 6th of Hathyr
with his virgin mother
and his holy apostles

on the mountain of Koskam,
the place where he dwelt
three years, fleeing
before the face of evil Herod.

He sanctified the temple
of that house
over and above all the churches
that are in the oikoumene.

He mounted upon a cloud,
with the cloud carrying
the Mother of God, Mary,
and the apostles alive ...

He bade our father Peter
to perform the *synaxis*;
he consecrated the house
with his hands raised to God ...

He baptized them [the apostles] in the water
of sanctification,
he gave them his holy Body
and his life-giving Blood.

He commanded them, saying,
"Remember your fathers
in every anaphora,
so I may give them rest."

Let us glorify his divinity,
for he became human like us;
let us glorify the Virgin
and the apostles all together.[50]

Clearly this hymn was composed to be sung at the pilgrims' Eucharist. Like the other two examples quoted here, it has come under the *ēchos Batos*, which in modern transmission is quite simple, with only a four-note range,[51] making it easy for visitors to pick up by ear and sing along, especially while walking in a procession. Works like these, probably composed in the late seventh to eighth centuries, are eye-opening examples of the Copts' facility in what must have been an oral-formulaic technique of putting together hymn quatrains out of a repertoire of standardized phrases to which, as can be seen from these examples, a great deal of creativity was added.

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[50] O'Leary, *Difnar*, fasc. 1 (London 1926), 53.

[51] Borsai, "Métrique et mélodie," 74.

A bilingual example worth noting that quite possibly came from a pilgrimage context is the Easter Trishagion preserved in MS Paris copte 129^{20} fol. 117r, also from Shenoute's monastery.[52] The greatest feast of the year would have been a prime occasion for residents of the Panopolite nome to gather at their central holy site. A Greek-language Trishagion troped with additions from Psalms 96, 92, and 95 is written in a text-block of six lines; the next line is occupied by the single rubric ⲡⲉϥⲃⲱⲗ, "its translation," which introduces the Coptic-language version that takes up the next six-and-a-half lines. This gives us a Trishagion frame-text of ϥⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲛϭⲓ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ· ϥⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲛϭⲓ ⲡϫⲱⲱⲣⲉ· ϥⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲛϭⲓ ⲡⲁⲧⲙⲟⲩ ⲙⲁⲩⲁⲁϥ. The only discrepancy is in the added phrase: the Greek has ⲟ ⲥⲁⲣⲕⲱⲑⲉⲓⲥ ⲇⲓ ⲏⲙⲁⲥ (as expected) but the Coptic, *not* a translation, has ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲧⲙⲟⲟⲩⲧ, "who rose from the dead." Neither text, of course, has any marks for cantillation (choir and congregation would have known it by heart):[53] and yet it was chanted before a Greek Gospel reading. The users of this liturgical book continued to possess the ability to employ both Greek and Coptic on solemn occasions (and, one assumes, would have been aware of the non-equivalence of the two added phrases in this example).

To sum up, chant clearly played the prominent role one might expect it to have played in the pilgrimage observances enacted in Christian Egypt, even though we have no remains of that chant *per se*. However, in P. Jeffery's words, "... critical evaluation of the non-musical evidence remains essential, for it can tell us much that purely musical evidence cannot."[54] For the only realm of the Christian East that did not write down its musical repertoire, *lex cantandi* remained *lex credendi*.[55]

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[52] I am indebted to the Institute of Christian Oriental Research, Catholic University, for the use of their marvellous collection of photo-reproductions of Coptic MSS. Compare H. Quecke, *Untersuchungen zu dem koptischen Stundengebet* (Louvain 1974), 524; and before him DeL. O'Leary in *Orientalia* 3 (1934):201–204.

[53] Compare the remarks of Hiley, *Western Plainchant*, 365–369, and of M.B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot 1992), 35–36.

[54] P. Jeffery, "The lost chant tradition of early Christian Jerusalem," *Early Music History* 11 (1992):152.

[55] This study is, as always, in loving memory of Mirrit Boutros Ghali ("Dies Augenzelt von deinem Glanz allein erhellt: O füll' es ganz").

A LITURGICAL PROCESSION IN THE DESERT OF APA SHENOUTE

Janet Timbie

Introduction: A Stational Pilgrimage in Coptic Egypt

"This rite is (for) the feast of the desert of Apa Shenoute." So begins a text contained in the interesting, but little-studied, manuscript, Paris Copte 68 (FR-BN Copte 68).[1] Even a casual study of the text reveals that the "feast of Apa Shenoute" included a ritual procession to several sites in the vicinity of the White Monastery. The desert (ϫⲁⲉⲓⲉ) cannot be the White Monastery compound alone.[2] To one who is familiar with the works of Shenoute of Atripe, there is some irony in the fact that he became the object of an organized rite of devotion. Shenoute (d. 464/465),[3] both abbot of the White Monastery in Upper Egypt for many years and the most prolific Coptic author, made forceful objections to the devotional practices of his Christian contemporaries, when these included visits to the shrines of martyrs. According to Shenoute, Christians were obsessed with the hunt for the bones of martyrs.[4] When they found the bones, even if the martyr connection was uncertain, they wanted to put them in the churches or build a separate chapel or shrine to house the bones. This is the work of demons, in Shenoute's view, since the "fathers" who are recently deceased ordered us not to search for their burial sites, and there is also no scriptural basis for devotion to relics.[5] And apart from the wrongdoing involved in building a martyr's shrine, further sins are committed in worship at the shrine. According to Shenoute, singing, eating, drinking to excess that leads to fornication and even murder, are some of the acts that take place at shrines. "Oh, if the martyr lived now with us, we would know how angry he is at us."[6]

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[1] Paris Copte 68.4r. I would like to thank Leslie S.B. MacCoull for calling my attention to this text when I was in the early stages of research into the topic of pilgrimage to Shenoutean sites. In this paper, I will cite the ms. as BN 68.

[2] This fact was noted by Stefan Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit: Eine Sammlung christlicher Stätten in Ägypten in arabischer Zeit, unter Ausschluss von Alexandria, Kairo, des Apa-Mena-Klosters (Dēr Abū Mina), der Skētis (Wādi n-Natrūn) und der Sinai-Region.* Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften), 41, 2 (Wiesbaden 1984), 621–622.

[3] For Shenoute's chronology, see Stephen Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1993), 3–11.

[4] The text is translated by E. Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* (Paris 1907–1914), 1.196–220. For a careful reconstruction of the sermon, see Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 636–637, 977.

The reference to recently deceased "fathers" suggests that both monastic holy men and actual martyrs were becoming the object of devotion. Shenoute himself noted that people were visiting his monastery from many cities, regions, and countries.[7] So it is not surprising that Shenoute became the focus of ritual commemoration after his death, in spite of his objections. The synaxarion of the Coptic Church (a calendar of saints' days with biographies) notes Shenoute on July 14, though other dates for his feast are also known.[8] And an organized rite of pilgrimage developed and continued in the vicinity of the White Monastery until around 1200, according to BN 68, as will be shown below.[9] At present, the seventh of Abib (July 14), the feast of St. Shenudah, is the occasion for celebration at the White Monastery.[10] But the modern rite lacks the procession to different sites in the territory around the White Monastery that is the essence of BN 68.

A brief description of the physical characteristics of BN 68 and its contents must precede analysis.[11] BN 68 is written on paper and dates from the 15th–16th centuries. The scribe imitates older manuscripts, especially certain 13th or 14th century examples now in the Vatican Library, but originally from the White Monastery.[12] 77 pages are in the Paris collection (4r–141v), one page in Leiden (158r–v). The text is broken in several places, but the general outline of the ritual is clear in pp. 4–141, though the end of the text is missing. The text is written in Coptic, Greek, and Arabic. The Coptic is mainly Sahidic, though Bohairic is found in short sections containing formal liturgical passages: 23r–26r, the prayer of the three young men in the fiery furnace; 32r–v, four prayers to Mary. Greek sections are interspersed throughout the Coptic text. In some cases, the Greek seems to be used for fixed liturgical material that is left untranslated; at other times, Greek text and Coptic translation alternate. The Greek orthography is very poor, sometimes to the point of rendering the text unintelligible without the Coptic translation. An Arabic translation appears in a parallel column for parts of the text: 4r, opening instructions; 8v–9v, Matt. 17:1–9; 28r–30v, John 12:12–36; 32v, instructions to pilgrims; 50r–64v, sermon of Shenoute; 93r–97v, readings for mass (Heb. 9:2–8, 2 Pet. 1:13–19, Acts 7:44–53, Ps. 121:1–4, Matt. 16:13–20). Thus, Arabic is found in those sections that most involve all the worshippers, who were certainly Arabic speakers when this manuscript was produced. And as to the reason why short sections only are written in Bohairic, one can only speculate. The song of the three young men—and their entire story—was the focus of much devotional material in the Coptic churches, both orthodox and monophysite.[13] The scribe who copied this manuscript in its final form (BN 68), or even a somewhat earlier form, may have altered previously Sahidic material to conform to the now-standard dialect, or he may have inserted popular devotional material written in the form familiar to most worshippers when the manuscript was written. The same reasoning would apply to the Bohairic Mary prayers.

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[5] Louis-Théophile Lefort, "La chasse aux reliques des martyrs en Égypte au IV^{e} siècle," *Nouvelle Clio* 6 (1954):225–230.

[6] Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 1.199–207. See also Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 977.

[7] Johannes Leipoldt, *Schenute von Atripe und die Entstehung des national ägyptischen Christentums* (Leipzig 1903), 162.

[8] Aziz S. Atiya, "Synaxarion, Copto-Arabic," *Coptic Encyclopedia* (New York 1991), 7.2171–2190.

[9] Tito Orlandi, "Shenoute d'Atripe," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite* (Paris 1991), 14.797–804.

[10] Gérard Viaud, "Pilgrimages," *Coptic Encyclopedia* 6.55–56.

[11] Earlier descriptions of this ms. are found in the already cited works by Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 554, Leipoldt, *Schenute von Atripe*, 8, 59 n. 1, 65 n. 3, Orlandi, "Shenoute d'Atripe," and Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Agypten* 41, 2.621–622. See also several articles by Walter Ewing Crum, "Review of Pleyte and Boeser 1897," *OLZ* 2 (1899):18, "Review of Leipoldt 1903," *JTS* 5 (1904):132–133, "Review of Munier 1916," *JEA* 4 (1917):69 n. 6. The most important recent work has been done by Hans Quecke, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet* (Louvain 1970), 493–495, for description of ms.

The content of BN 68 can be summarized as a series of steps or instructions, offered here without the detailed explanations that will appear below. The opening line, on a page numbered four (4r), states that this "rite is the feast of the desert of Apa Shenoute." The people of ⲡⲁⲛⲟⲥ (Akhmim) should gather at ⲧⲕⲉⲗϫⲉ ⲙⲡⲥⲁϩ (the corner of the master)[14] and then proceed up to the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ (mountain or monastery). All these instructions appear on 4r. From there they go north to the church called ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ (32r). The procession next stops at the ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ (sea) on 65r while reference is made to many psalms that mention water or the sea. Then, beginning at a certain ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ (place or church, 79v) there is a procession around the church (82r) and mass is celebrated. The people then "go down" (100r) and, proceeding north, enter the door of the monastery of Apa Shenoute (137r).[15] Entering the "door of the monastery" (138v) they go to the door of the church of the Virgin Mary and St. George (139r), which seem to be two distinct spaces within the monastery walls.[16] First, they enter the Virgin Mary church (139v), then the ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ (140r) of St. George and stop at the ⲗⲓⲙⲏⲛ (140v) of St. George. The procession "goes out" (141v) and BN 68 breaks off at 141v. No specific instructions appear in the Leiden manuscript page (158).

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[12] Quecke, *Untersuchungen*, 493–494.

[13] On this theme in the Coptic Church, see Henri de Vis, *Homélies coptes de la Vaticane* (Hauniae 1929), vol. 2; Jacob Muyser, "Le culte des Trois Saints Jeunes Gens chez les Coptes," *Cahiers coptes* 6 (1954):17–31; Michel van Esbroeck, "Three Hebrews in the Furnace," *Coptic Encyclopedia* 7.2257–2259.

The instructions in BN 68 constitute an itinerary for pilgrims from the nearby town of Akhmim, and probably from other Egyptian towns as well, who have come to honor Shenoute. The itinerary in turn is a source of information on the topography of the area around the White Monastery and the location of Shenoutean sites that were still standing in the early medieval period. As noted above, worshippers visited Shenoute's monastery in large numbers even during his lifetime. After his death in 464/465 it seems that a formal ritual procession gradually took shape and continued in the manner recorded in BN 68 until around 1200. Thus the itinerary is also an example of popular religious practice in Christian Egypt during the period after the Arab Conquest (642 CE).

Before turning to the particulars of BN 68, and attempting to solve some of its problems, it may be helpful to look briefly at the patterns of Christian pilgrimage in Egypt and at some theoretical treatments of the subject.[17] A neutral definition of pilgrimage is offered by Linda Davidson: "Pilgrimage is the physical journey from one's normal place of residence, to a religious shrine in order to pay homage to a recognized holy being and through that religious activity to pay homage to or request a special favor from God."[18] Victor and Edith Turner contend that pilgrimage sites are typically located on the outskirts of a town to facilitate the pilgrims' break with conventional social structure and foster the creation of new, shared experiences.[19] Travel to the sacred site—in this case, several sites linked to Shenoute—and travel at the site in the form of processions between and around special features both symbolize a break with ordinary routine and arrival in a different world.[20]

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[14] This literal translation, like many that follow, is shorthand that avoids critical issues that must be explored in depth later.

[15] Later termed the monastery of Panopolis, 138v.

[16] Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten*, 621–622.

[17] One of the most influential theories is that of Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York 1978); but see also Caroline Walker

Patterns of Christian pilgrimage were set by the late fourth century. Robert Wilken, in *The Land Called Holy*, notes that the veneration of holy places in Palestine was widespread by this time and was paralleled elsewhere by "tactile piety"—the veneration of bones and relics, shrines, books, chalices, etc.[21] According to Egeria's account of her visit to the Holy Land in the late fourth century, at each site, "the Bible was read to remind the pilgrim of the event at that site. Prayers were recited, psalms were read, and the Eucharist was offered in some cases."[22]

Throughout the Christian world the above-mentioned "tactile piety" combined with desire for the benefits of pilgrimage to increase devotion to the burial places of martyrs and other holy persons. It began in many places with funerary rites at the graves of martyrs. The excesses of such rites—feasting, libertine behavior, misuse of the Eucharist—were condemned by both Augustine and Shenoute,

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Bynum, "Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality," *Fragmentation and Redemption* (New York 1991), 37.

[18] Linda Kay Davidson and Maryjane Dunn-Wood, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages: A Research Guide* (New York 1993), 13.

[19] Cited by Simon Coleman and John Elsner, *Pilgrimage, Past and Present in the World Religions* (Cambridge 1995), 201.

[20] Ibid., 32–33, "... the act of encircling the sacred goal ritually defines a sacred space as well as marking the fact that the pilgrim has arrived there ... The circumambulation continues the theme of the pilgrim's movement but rather than involving a directional, linear striving to reach the goal now encapsulates the sacred centre in a circular embrace."

[21] Robert Wilken, *The Land Called Holy* (New Haven 1992), 101, 112, 115. Holy Land pilgrimage grew and was criticized by Gregory of Nyssa, cited by Wilken, 101. Such theoretical criticism seems to have had little effect on practice, just as Shenoute's criticism of devotion to martyrs/saints did not prevent a cult from forming around him.

[22] Ibid., 112.

indicating the wide range of the practices.[23] Early shrines were on the edge of town and therefore somewhat outside the control of the family, the church, and society as a whole. Peter Brown notes that this made the shrines especially attractive to women and the poor.[24] Devotion to martyrs and saints continued and developed into either short or long-distance pilgrimage, but it also came under the control of ecclesiastical authorities. One purpose of Brown's *Cult of the Saints* is to show how the bishop in western Europe took possession of relics and incorporated them into the cathedral church.[25] But we can track the same development in Upper Egypt. The libertine behavior in the cemetaries, which Shenoute condemned, evolved, in part, into the highly-structured, clerically-controlled rite of BN 68.

The rite of BN 68 is, in essence, a liturgical procession. The pilgrims assemble, walk from place to place within an area of a few square miles, and recite prayers, scriptural passages, and/or celebrate the Eucharist at each place. This practice is sometimes termed "stational liturgy."[26] But the more careful usage of John Baldovin, whose *Urban Character of Christian Worship* is the best study of stational liturgy,[27] distinguishes stational liturgy from liturgical procession.[28]

Stational liturgy is a service of worship at a designated church, shrine, or public place in or

> near a city or town, on a designated feast, fast, or commemoration, which is presided over by the bishop or his representative and intended as the local church's main liturgical celebration of the day.

In Christian usage, the statio (= standing or military guardpost) or station is originally the fast on Wednesday and Friday, as in the Shepherd of Hermas, *Sim.* 5.1.1. The meaning of station evolves from fasts to assemblies on fast days to ecclesiastical assemblies (not liturgical) to the *place* of liturgical assemblies.[29]

On the other hand, the liturgical procession must have roots in pagan practice. The panegyreis of ancient Greece were participatory processions including assemblies, games, sacrifices, as well as the procession itself. Later, we find the triumph procession in Rome and the circus procession. As Baldovin states, "The late antique world of the Mediterranean was a world of processions." However, he goes on to say, "... there is simply no hard evidence for such Christian processions prior to the sixth century."[30] In Egeria's account there is no official procession from one Holy Land site to another. We may imagine that as Christianity emerged from the shadow of persecution in the reign of Constantine, worship gradually took on a more public character. In Jerusalem, the events of Christ's betrayal and death provided a ready-made itinerary and the stational liturgy that underlies Egeria's account becomes a "solemn ritual procession"[31] moving from site to site.

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[23] Augustine, *Confessions* 6.22, *Letters* 29.9; Shenoute, see n. 4 above for references.

[24] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago 1981), 44.

[25] Ibid., 135–137.

[26] P. Doncoeur, "La sens humaine de la procession," *La maison dieu* 43 (1955):33–34.

[27] John Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome 1987).

[28] Ibid., 137.

[29] Ibid., 144.

In Rome, Gregory the Great gives ample evidence of liturgical processions in the sixth century: an epidemic in 590 was the occasion for supplication; a letter in 591 mentions a supplicatory procession moving through a series of churches.[32] Gregory, writing in 599, refers to the antiquity of these processions. The sixth century Roman processions have common features: they are penitential, follow a short route that would require about an hour to complete, and begin in a church with a piazza to allow the participants to assemble. Baldovin suggests that Constantinopolitan practice may have influenced Rome, beginning in the fourth century, though the clearest evidence is from the sixth.[33] According to Theodore Lector, writing between 511–518, liturgical processions took place every Friday, ending at the church of the Theotokos. Special processions were staged when natural disasters such as earthquakes occurred. Processions multiplied in Constantinople. Stations or stopping-places on the route were related to the historical event that inspired the procession (e.g., an earthquake or siege) or to a saint's memorial. John Chrysostom organized ecclesiastical processions to counter the public demonstrations of the Arian party. The procession was a way of claiming ownership of the space, whether it included city streets or places on the outskirts of the city.[34] The early, non-Egyptian evidence supports the view that Christian processions in late antiquity can be divided into two broad categories: personage-centered and participatory.[35] "Personage-centered" refers to the transit of a bishop or emperor from place to place (e.g. Baldovin's stational liturgy). "Participatory" includes both the supplicatory (Great Litany in Rome, response to earthquake in Constantinople) and the mimetic (Palm Sunday, Good Friday/Via Crucis) in which worshippers re-trace the steps of Christ. Such categories are easily identified in other world religions, as Coleman and Elsner make clear, and movement/procession is a key element of pilgrimage: "Apart from involving travel across the landscape (even in those cases where the journey has no specific goal), pilgrimage practices tend to ritualise motion at a sacred site itself."[36] Pilgrims move from sacred site to sacred site in procession (often tracing events in a life, as in the eight canonical holy places of Buddhism, or the Islamic holy sites associated with the life of the Prophet) and in their movements symbolically effect transformation in themselves.[37]

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[30] Ibid., 165.

[31] Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, 114.

[32] Baldovin, *Urban Character of Christian Worship*, 158. The Greek term λιτανεία was applied to supplication during a procession; see Baldovin, 207.

[33] Ibid., 160.

[34] Ibid., 165.

Turning to Egyptian pilgrimages and processions specifically, they seem to have developed along lines similar to the rest of the Christian East until the seventh century.[38] Pilgrims visited supposed biblical sites such as Hermopolis, where the Holy Family rested under a tree on the flight to Egypt.[39] The tombs of martyrs and other holy people also attracted pilgrims. In some cases, the Christian shrine replaced a site of pagan devotion as when the shrine of St. Cyrus and St. John replaced an Isis healing shrine at Menouthis by the end of the fifth century.[40] Just as Christian healing shrines replaced pagan healing shrines in Egypt, communal meals at the tombs of Christian martyrs perpetuated and yet transformed the pagan practice of meals at the tomb of a deceased person. Such meals could be part of the pilgrim's visit to the martyr's shrine—and could lead to abuse, as Shenoute charges in his sermons.[41]

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[35] Grant Sperry White, "Processions," *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York 1997), 2.950b–951a.

[36] Coleman and Elsner, *Pilgrimage*, 205.

[37] Coleman and Elsner, *Pilgrimage*, 134, 211.

[38] For a general treatment, see Pierre Maraval, "Pèlerinages chrètiens," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 12.901–909.

[39] Jean Doresse, *Des hieroglyphes à la croix* (Istanbul 1960), 28 n. 76; he suggests that a pagan pilgrimage shrine may have existed at this site.

[40] Eva Wipszycka notes that one cult may have been superseded by the other at the end of the fifth century; see "La christianization de l'Égypte aux IV–VI siècles," *Aegyptus* 68 (1988):142.

[41] Shenoute complains of such behavior at the graves of martyrs in a sermon,

Another motive for pilgrimage in Egypt was the desire to visit famous monks. The practice became common in the fourth century. Some visitors stayed and became monks (e.g., Evagrius Ponticus); others wrote of their encounters (Jerome, John Cassian, Rufinus). Some visitors sought advice, cures, or other miracles from the monks.[42]

If pilgrimage in Egypt began with a focus on biblical sites, transformed pagan shrines, or saints'—whether ascetics or martyrs—relics, the practice of the modern Coptic Church continues the tradition, as Gérard Viaud has noted.[43]

> For the Copts, pilgrimage is a religious act of public worship of high spiritual and social value, consisting of an act of veneration offered directly to God and his saints, or to God through his saints ... It implies ... bodily fatigue, asceticism, and often a vow, with an offering being made and the poor receiving their share of alms.

Pilgrims ask for a cure, some special grace, or the future health of a child being baptized at the shrine.[44] Saints' shrines multiplied until nearly every settlement in Egypt had one or more shrines that were the object of pilgrimage. The number of shrines is now greatly reduced, but basic practices remain the same. A three or seven day festival may draw pilgrims to a saint's shrine where a variety of activities culminate in the evening vigil (Great Night) preceding the feast day, the "birthday" of the saint marking his second birth into everlasting life.[45] Another type of pilgrimage consists of assembling to walk in procession to the shrine of the saint. The procession may be short or long, involve few or many worshippers, and may be part of a popular festival lasting several days.[46] During the procession, or

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"Since it Behooves Christians." The sermon is edited and translated by Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi*, 1.199–207. Pierre Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient: Histoire et géographie des origines a la conquête arabe* (Paris 1985), 218.

[42] The reasons that visitors sought out early ascetic retreats are summarized by Maraval, *Lieux saints*, 81.

[43] Viaud, "Pilgrimages," p. 1968.

[44] Christine Cannuyer, *Les coptes* (Brussels 1990), 161–162.

[45] Viaud, "Pilgrimages," 1968. He also lists major modern pilgrimages on pp. 1969–1971.

[46] Cannuyer, *Les coptes*, 161–162. O.H.E. Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church* (Cairo 1967), 263, 265–268, notes that processions are part of modern Coptic worship on various holy days (two feasts of the Holy Cross, Palm Sunday, etc.). Worshippers make three circuits of the sanctuary, three around the church, one around the altar. Michael Gilsenen, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt* (Oxford 1973), 50, describes behavior at Muslim shrines in modern Egypt in similar terms. On the *mulid* (either birth or death day of the saint) worshippers crowd into the room with

at some other time during the pilgrimage, worshippers may pause in front of an icon (of the Virgin Mary or a saint), at the tomb or relic receptacle of the saint, and recite a tamgid in honor of the saint. The tamgid is comprised of chants of praise ending with the phrase, "worthy, worthy, worthy (is) the saint."[47] The relics themselves are often kept in boxes stored in a sort of locker under the icon; thus, the pilgrim's tamgid may be directed both to the icon and the relics in one gesture.[48]

The activities around the White Monastery that are prescribed in BN 68 conform to the established pattern of pilgrimage in Egypt in broad outline. But each specific detail of BN 68 presents problems, both historical and linguistic. The worshippers honor Shenoute by processing to several sites in turn, covering a distance of a few miles. Sites include various churches, the place where Shenoute's physical remains were preserved, and special images or icons inside the churches. Different types of worship—prayers, chants, Eucharist—take place during the procession and at each stop along the way. It is certainly a participatory procession, with elements both of supplication, as pilgrims request healing when they arrive at the icon of St. George (140v), and imitation, in the visits to several important Shenoutean sites.

I. *The setting of the rite*

"This rite is (for) the feast of the desert of Apa Shenoute."[49] The opening line of BN 68 signals that it contains the liturgy for a feast day in the "desert of Apa Shenoute." Desert, ϫⲁⲉⲓⲉ, begins in Egypt where the Nile-watered strip of cultivated land ends, and spreads outward into the arid wilderness. The phrase "desert place", ⲙⲁ ⲛϫⲁⲉⲓⲉ, in many cases means monastery, since a primary characteristic of a monastery was isolation.[50] Here, however, the desert of Apa Shenoute does not mean simply the monastery of Apa Shenoute,

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the shrine and circumambulate it, then make physical contact with it to "take the baraka from the mulid."

[47] Gérard Viaud, *Les pèlerinages coptes en Égypte d'après les notes du Qommos Jacob Muyser* (Cairo 1979), 76.

[48] Otto F.A. Meinardus, *Christian Egypt: Faith and Life* (Cairo 1970), 233.

[49] BN 68.4r.

[50] Walter Ewing Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford 1939), 745b–746a.

i.e. the White Monastery. Much later, on 137r, worshippers are instructed to "sing as you enter the door of the monastery (ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ) of our father Apa Shenoute." If the procession arrives at the door of the White Monastery only at this point, then the initial reference is to something broader. The desert, in fact, is the *domain* of Shenoute, comprising several sites. Shenoute described his domain in this way:[51] "Our territory is from the ravine which is north of the village of Atripe up to the ravine south of our venerable father, Apa Pshoi, the place where he first lived in the desert." Susanna Elm has correctly described this as a monastic compound, approximately ten square kilometers in area, for the place of Pshoi refers to his hermitage in the desert, where Shenoute also lived for a time,[52] not to the Red Monastery.[53] However, the eastern boundary is not defined and if the compound extended to the Nile on the east, the area would be closer to fifty square kilometers. It is clear that the compound included space for intensive farming and several "daughter" communities, one of which was located in a village south of the main monastery. Apparently, this was an ordinary village located within Shenoute's domain. The women's community that he supervised was in this village and some monks also lived in the village to assist the women's community. Other, smaller communities existed north of the main monastery, within the domain.[54] There may also have been solitary monks in Shenoute's domain, nominally under his authority, and the use of the term "desert" for their dwelling-places complicates the question. Shenoute commands:[55]

> Four times a year, on the Sabbath, which our father decreed for us, everyone who is in the desert of our domain (ϩⲓⲡϣⲁⲓⲉ ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲕⲱⲧⲉ) will gather with the brothers at the same time, except for the sick. But whoever dwells in the desert (ϫⲁⲉⲓⲉ), not wishing to follow the

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[51] In the edition of Johannes Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia*, CSCO 73, 120.

[52] See Besa, *Life of Shenoute*; also Dwight W. Young, *Coptic Manuscripts from the White Monastery: Works of Shenoute* (Vienna 1993), 72.

[53] Susanna Elm, *"Virgins of God": The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 1994), 299.

[54] Elm, *"Virgins of God"*, 299–300, examines Shenoute's remarks (see CSCO 108.72; 73.62–63, 69–70) and summarizes them in this way. See also Leipoldt, *Schenute von Atripe*, 95–97. The ⲥⲩⲛⲁⲅⲱⲅⲏ ϣⲏⲙ is separate from the White Monastery, Shenoute's residence, since he states some "go to the small community, or brothers in the small community come to this place, or with charity for the community of brothers in the village" (CSCO 73.70).

[55] Shenoute, CSCO 73.120.

> rules that our fathers laid down for us, if he is in our community (ⲥⲩⲛⲁⲅⲱⲅⲏ), will be expelled, whether man or woman. And if he is in the desert of our domain, we will gather and go to the place where he is and cast him out from near us. If… he opposes us, we will send down to the place where he dwells and expel him by force.

Monks who live a more solitary life, outside the White Monastery but within Shenoute's domain, have made themselves subject to his authority. Later use of desert/ϫⲁⲉⲓⲉ, still in the Shenoutean milieu, is unspecific. The colophon to a manuscript dated 1091 states that the book was presented by a woman and her mother to the place (ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ) of the Virgin in the desert of Apa Shenoute at Atripe.[56]

II. *The pilgrims assemble*

It seems that the opening sentence of BN 68 indicates by the reference to the desert of Apa Shenoute that the rite or procession will range over the domain, since desert/ϫⲁⲉⲓⲉ had both a narrow and a broad meaning, and the text soon directs the procession to a site that is definitely not in the White Monastery. "On the Monday of the second week of the holy forty days, all the people go up to the mountain (ⲧⲟⲟⲩ) and gather at the corner of the master (ⲧⲕⲉⲗϫⲉ ⲙⲡⲥⲁϩ)".[57] The date of the pilgrimage can be fixed to the beginning of the second week of the forty day fast preceding Holy Week and Easter. In the Coptic Church, a 55 day period of fasting precedes Easter: the seven day fast of Heraclius marking the massacre of Jews in Jerusalem by Heraclius, forty days commemorating Jesus' fast in the wilderness, two intercalary days, and the Holy Week fast, including Saturday.[58] Early evidence in Egypt indicates that the "forty days" began after Epiphany to clearly imitate Jesus' fast.[59] Athanasius speaks of a pre-Easter fast of forty days, not because it is the Egyptian custom, but in order to bring Egypt into conformity with Western practice.[60] The change has been made in Alexandria by the seventh century, as shown by the festal letters of the patriarch Benjamin I,[61] but it is hard to be precise on the date at which a forty day fast, still commemorating Jesus' fast, was fixed *before* Easter. If the change was prompted by the Council of Nicaea and promoted by Athanasius, it probably spread rapidly in Egypt and therefore it is safe to conclude that the second Monday of the holy forty days refers to the second week of a pre-Easter period.[62]

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[56] Arnold van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte*, Bibliothèque du *Muséon* (Louvain 1929), 128; also Maurice Martin, "Dayr Anba Shinudah," *Coptic Encyclopedia*, 3.761–766.

[57] BN 68.4r.

[58] Gérard Viaud, *La liturgie des coptes d'Égypte* (Paris 1978), 42–43.

[59] Thomas J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York 1986), 191–215; also, René-Georges Coquin, "Les origines de l'Épiphanie en Égypte," *Lex Orandi* (Paris 1967), 40.147–148.

[60] Talley, *Origins of the Liturgical Year*, 194. The point at which the forty day fast

Having established the date of the pilgrimage, can we locate the "mountain" and the "corner of the master" where the procession begins? Crum demonstrated that **ⲦⲞⲞⲨ** can mean monastery or community of hermits, by extension, since such groups were often located on the mountain, or higher, uncultivated land, that bordered the Nile Valley.[63] In support of the meaning, Crum cites BN 68.65r: "Apa Shenoute, the archimandrite of the **ⲦⲞⲞⲨ** of Atripe." The same phrase appears in the *Life of Matthew the Poor*: "He also was a holy prophet in our generation, like our father Apa Shenoute, the prophet of the **ⲦⲞⲞⲨ** of Atripe."[64] Also, on a grave stele near the ruins of the town of Atripe, the name of "the holy mountain (**ⲦⲞⲞⲨ**), of Apa Shenoute the archimandrite" is invoked.[65] The necropolis of Atripe where the stele was found is located three km south of the White Monastery. But the use of **ⲦⲞⲞⲨ** in BN 68 does not fit the narrow meaning of "monastery." BN 68.4r describes the beginning of the procession which will arrive *later* (137r) at the "monastery of Apa Shenoute." Therefore, "go up to the mountain" seems to mean "go to the mountain of Atripe," the domain of Shenoute, which was a large territory. The pilgrims would come from Panopolis/Akhmim and in order to proceed toward Shenoute's domain, they would necessarily "go up" from the cultivated valley to the "mountain."

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in Egypt was separated from Epiphany and attached to the pre-Paschal period is disputed in the sources: Eutychius (X cent.) fixes it in the time of Demetrius (II/III-cent. patriarch), see *PG* 111.989; Severus, in *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, states that the Council of Nicaea "fixed the days of the fast and the day of Pascha" (*PO* I.5.10.5, 1.402, 407).

[61] Talley, *Origins of the Liturgical Year*, 219.

[62] The feast of St. Shenoute, and the occasion for celebration at his monastery, is now fixed on July 14.

[63] Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 440b.

[64] *Life of Matthew the Poor*, cited in Oscar von Lemm, *Koptische Miscellen* (St. Petersburg 1911), 110.1251.

[65] V. de Bock, *Matériaux pour servir à l'archéologie de l'Égypte chrétienne* (St. Petersburg 1901), 69.

The specific place of assembly must be ⲧⲕⲉⲗⲍⲉ ⲙⲡⲥⲁϩ (4r). Unfortunately, the phrase is not easily explained. Hans Quecke, without extended discussion, decided it was unclear and referred to the Arabic parallel translation, "hill of the teacher," without any conviction that this was the original meaning.[66] Crum noted that ⲧⲕⲉⲗⲍⲉ ⲙⲡⲥⲁϩ is a place-name in the monastic site of Scetis and argues from this that BN 68 came from that community.[67] But there is no other support for Crum's idea, so the spot is probably located somewhere on the "mountain" of Atripe, the domain of Shenoute. Particularly in Bible translations, ⲕⲉⲗⲍⲉ can mean angle or street corner as in Matt. 6:5, translating γωνία, "pray in the synagogues and at the *street corners*." This suggests that the point of assembly might be the residence—in a village or monastic compound within the domain—of the ⲥⲁϩ. The range of meaning for ⲥⲁϩ is generally "writer, teacher, master."[68] Alone, it translates scribe in Biblical passages and with a modifier signifies "master of ...," as in ⲡⲥⲁϩ ⲛⲅⲁⲗⲗⲓⲅⲣⲁⲫⲁ. As an ecclesiastical title, the ⲥⲁϩ is one who reads the λόγος, εξήγησις and ψάλλει. Crum cites one place-name that is a close parallel: ⲡⲙⲁ ⲙⲡⲥⲁϩ.[69] This seventh century document states that surety is being provided for Apa Shenoute, a priest: "I, Shenoute, the priest of the place of the ⲥⲁϩ." More promising are the occurrences cited by Quecke in the context of a discussion of Coptic psalmody.[70] An inscription at Bawit reads: "the ⲥⲁϩ Makarius, the son of the ⲥⲁϩ Menas, the first of the singers (ⲯⲁⲗⲧⲏⲥ)." An appropriate translation here might be cantor or choir leader. The rite described in BN 68 contains large sections of thematically arranged biblical passages, hymns, and prayers. Were these read, recited, or sung by one or more individuals or by the entire procession, following a leader? In any case there was a clear need for a cantor or choir leader in the pilgrimage procession and, therefore, assembling at the "corner of the choir leader" fits the beginning of the rite. Shortly after these instructions, a series of opening phrases to biblical passages follows (4r–5r), all including the term "assemble" or "assembly."

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[66] Quecke, *Untersuchungen*, 490.

[67] Crum. *Coptic Dictionary*, p. 108a, on ⲕⲗⲍⲉ as part of a place-name, in which he also makes the case for the origin of BN 68. Quecke, *Untersuchungen*, 490, rejects this argument.

[68] Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 383b–384a.

[69] Crum, ibid., 384a.

[70] Quecke, *Untersuchungen*, 77–78, 88 n. 46; cited by Jürgen Horn, *Studien zu den Märtyrern des nördlichen Oberägypten*, 1: *Märtyrerverehrung und Märtyrerlegende im Werk des Schenute: Beiträge zur ältesten ägyptischen Märtyrerüberlieferung*, Göttinger Orientforschungen, 4th ser., 15 (Wiesbaden 1986), 104 n. 86.

The next few pages are made up of key words introducing a series of opening lines of scripture. For example, the word "thousand" (7r.6) introduces a series of seven scriptural passages along the lines of "a single day in your courts is greater than ten thousand outside" (7r.11–12, Ps. 83:9–10). A break in the manuscript at 7v is followed by prayers in Greek and Coptic.[71] The first extended biblical passage, the Transfiguration according to Matt. 17:1–9, follows in Coptic on 8v–9v, with an Arabic translation in a parallel column. Since we know that the rite of BN 68 is celebrated during Lent (4r) and that the Feast of the Transfiguration is ordinarily celebrated in the Coptic Church on August 19, the relevance of the passage may lie in the route taken by the procession. The people are first told to "go up to the mountain" (4r) and it was argued above (p. 439) that this "mountain" was not the White Monastery, but the domain of Shenoute as a whole. The gospel reading is appropriate if the first destination of the procession is at some distance from the White Monastery, perhaps farther into the desert and at a somewhat higher elevation. There is no suggestion at this point that the gospel reading is part of a celebration of the mass.

BN 68 is missing pages 10–20. The passage from the Gospel of Matthew ends on 9v, an unbroken page. The text resumes on 21r, apparently in the middle of another series of short biblical citations, all containing the key word **ⲥⲙⲟⲩ**, bless or praise. These are followed by Psalms 148, 149, and 150 in their entirety in Coptic (Sahidic) only. The psalms are followed by the Prayer of the Three Young Men (Dan. 3:52–90), material found only in the Greek Daniel and then in later translations of the Bible. In BN 68, the prayer is in Bohairic, breaking the steady flow of Sahidic or Greek text. Alternating Greek and Sahidic prayer formulas follow, then a lengthy passage from the Gospel of John appears (John 12:12–36, BN 68.28r–30v) in Sahidic with an Arabic translation. The passage describes Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which suits a ritual procession that is moving toward the significant Shenoutean sites and is taking place during Lent.

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[71] Labeled **ⲏⲡⲏⲛⲟⲥ**, probably from Greek ἔταινος, praise.

III. *North to the* ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ *church*

At this point, the pilgrims have come out from Panopolis, assembled, and gone up to the mountain. They have yet to arrive anywhere and conduct any ceremony, but now they are told to "turn north to the ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ church" (32r). Can we locate this church, either in Shenoute's lifetime or in the present? Quecke offers no explanation of the name, but notes that this is not the church in the White Monastery, which is entered later in the procession (137r).[72] The ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ church is on higher ground than the White Monastery since the procession "goes up" at 4r, while it "goes down" at 100r, to enter the "monastery of Shenoute" at 137r. In the Ethiopian Synaxarion (cited by Quecke)[73] the entry for December 28 states that the church of Shenoute was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. On January 30, in the same Synaxarion, it is stated that Shenoute, Pgol, and Pshoi dedicated a church to the Virgin. The Coptic Church Synaxarion (in Arabic) gives an expanded account: "Pshoi, Shenoute, and Pgol remained together in piety and devotion; they built dwellings in the mountains and built a church under the protection of the pure Virgin, Mary … they called the church er-Rogamah."[74] Behind the Synaxarion is the *Life of Shenoute*, by Besa, in both Coptic and Arabic versions. In the Coptic *Life of Shenoute*, Shenoute, Pgol, and Pshoi meet and walk together. No church is mentioned.[75] The Arabic *Life* has some different information, for whenever the Coptic *Life* has ⲧⲟⲟⲩ/mountain, the Arabic translates with *rogamah*.[76] This may explain the passage in the Coptic Church Synaxarion: Pshoi, Shenoute, and Pgol dedicate a church to the Virgin and call it the "mountain" church.

However, BN 68 preserves a different tradition with a clear link to the Virgin Mary. ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ may not be a copticized er-Rogamah, but copticized Greek derived from ἀπειρόγαμος, an epithet used for the Virgin Mary and meaning "without experience of marriage."[77] At BN 68.140r a Greek hymn to the Virgin begins, in the very poor orthography that is common in this text, **ⲭⲁⲓⲣⲉ ⲑⲉⲟⲧⲟⲕⲉ ⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲏ ⲙ̄ⲏ̄ⲣ̄ ⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲙⲁⲛⲟⲩⲏⲗ ⲧⲏⲥⲡⲓⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ** (Hail, God-bearer, virgin mother of Emmanuel, mistress without experience of marriage).[78] It is possible, then, that the pilgrimage procession has reached the church/shrine built by Pshoi, Shenoute, and Pgol, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and called the **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ** (= ἀπειρογάμου), a title for Mary. In that case, BN 68 preserves a different tradition from that of the Arabic sources, which label this church er-Rogamah. In addition, this church would be situated at a higher elevation than the White Monastery, perhaps farther into the desert.[79]

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[72] Quecke, *Untersuchungen*, 490–492. At BN 68.100, after mass, the people "go down" and at 137r, enter the "door of the monastery of Apa Shenoute."

[73] Quecke, ibid., 491 n. 19.

[74] René Basset, *Le synaxaire arabe jacobite* (redaction copte), *PO* 11 (1915):792–793.

[75] Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 9, ed. and trans. David N. Bell, CS 00 (Kalamazoo, MI 1983).

[76] Besa, *Life of Shenoute*, ed. and trans. E. Amélineau, *Les moines égyptiens: Vie de Schenoudi* (Paris 1899), 437.

[77] G.W. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961), 180.

Others have proposed different solutions to the problem. Monneret identified the church of Pshoi, Pgol, and Shenoute—the er-Rogamah—as the church of the White Monastery.[80] But this explanation does not fit BN 68.100r; after synaxis, the procession is ordered to go down and later (137r) "enter the door of the monastery of our holy father Apa Shenoute." The latter must be the White Monastery.[81] Martin has suggested that the three monks built cells and a church on a site that became the Red Monastery, still standing north of the White Monastery.[82] But BN 68, which honors Pshoi by name (78v, 79r), would plainly identify the monastery of Pshoi, the Red Monastery, if it were relevant here. Also, the **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ** church may be the site of Shenoute's burial place or relics and it is unlikely that this would be in the monastery of Pshoi.[83] Finally, BN 68.100 orders the procession to go down from **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ** and arrive at the monastery of Apa Shenoute. If this church is at a somewhat higher elevation than the White Monastery, it cannot be identified with the Red Monastery.

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[78] **ⲧⲏⲥⲡⲓⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ** = δέσποινα ἀπειρογάμου. The explanation of the Greek was suggested to me by Monica Blanchard, librarian at the Institute for Christian Oriental Research at Catholic University, in Washington, DC She has been most helpful to me in many ways.

[79] Peter Grossmann, "Sohag," *ArchOr* 25 (1974–77):324; other manuscript evidence points to the existence of a church in the desert associated with Shenoute, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and separate from the White Monastery. Martin, "Dayr Anba-Shinudah," 761–766, cites manuscript colophons collected by van Lantschoot in which reference is made to (1) "the church on the mountain, the Virgin Mary" and (2) the place of the Virgin Mary in the desert of Apa Shenoute, in the mount of Atripe."

[80] Ugo Monneret de Villard, *Les couvents près de Sohâg* (Milan 1925), 1.16–17. Various sources indicate that the White Monastery contained chapels dedicated to the Virgin, St. George, and Shenoute.

[81] Quecke agrees (*Untersuchungen*, 492), though he does not identify the site of **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ**.

[82] Maurice Martin, "Pilgrims and Travellers in Christian Egypt," *Coptic Encyclopedia* 6.1975–1977.

[83] See below, pp. 444–448.

IV. *Shenoute's sermon*

After arriving at the ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲥⲁⲙⲟⲩ church, the procession then (37v) "goes into the holy place" and, following a break in the manuscript, a complete sermon by Shenoute is inserted which may have been read to the participants at this point.[84] *Good is the Time for Launching the Boat to Sail* (BN 68.54r–64v) discusses appropriate ascetic practices for laypersons and monks. There are many citations from the prophets in the sermon, dealing with the punishment of sin and listing types of sin (61v): homosexuality, bestiality, adultery, and fornication. The sermon, whose content suits the variety of people that might be participating in the procession, is followed by a prayer to the "God of Apa Shenoute" (64v).

V. *To the thalassa of Apa Shenoute*

The next command is to "let all the people chant (ⲯⲁⲗⲗⲉⲓ) while walking to the sea/ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ of our holy father, Apa Shenoute, the archimandrite of the mountain of Atripe" (65r). This is followed by a long series of key words, each introducing a group of scriptural citations: desert, clouds, ship, sea, rivers, waves, valley, springs, water (65r–68v).[85] After another break, the manuscript continues at 78r, leaving a question: what is the "sea" of Apa Shenoute? O.H.E. Burmester, discussing "ancient Egyptian churches," describes a cavity on the east side of the altar known as the thalassa (Arabic bahr), but he is non-committal on its original purpose.[86] Burmester cites the earlier work of A.J. Butler, who states that the cavity in the altar contained relics of saints or martyrs, and then links this to the sea/ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ: "Corresponding to the altar-cavity of the Coptic Church and the sepulcrum of the Latin, there was always a place beneath the Greek altar ... called the sea, θάλασσα or θαγασσίδιον."[87] The modern form of the Coptic altar, as described by Peter Grossmann, is a cube of stone or brick with a small cavity on the east side, close to the floor, that is now used for consecrated oil. In addition, there is a shallow depression in the upper surface of the altar that originally held a relic, but is now covered with a consecrated wooden board.[88] None of these studies mentions the use of sea/ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ in BN 68.

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[84] Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 554–555, 986–987, summarizes the evidence on the text of this sermon; Leipoldt edits it, CSCO 73.173–197.

[85] See L. Villecourt, "Les observances liturgiques et la discipline du jeûne dans l'Église copte," *Le Muséon* 38 (1925):271, where he describes a Palm Sunday procession in the Thebaid in which appropriate psalm selections are chanted as the group passes features such as a hill, tree, or stream.

[86] O.H.E. KHS-Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church* (Cairo 1967), 22.

Quecke questions the use of sea in BN 68 and considers two possible explanations.[89] Sea/ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ—and the accompanying scriptural key words dealing with water—might be connected to an event in Besa's *Life of Shenoute*: the young Shenoute spends whole nights standing in water, praying (8.8); Shenoute allows an island to sink into the Nile (41.25); when the Nile flood does not occur as expected, Shenoute retreats to his desert cell to pray (50.1, 56.6); Shenoute travels over the sea on a cloud (16.6, 31.20).[90] "Walk to the sea/ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ" could mean that the procession visited the site of one of these watery exploits. But Quecke is unable to connect any of these incidents with the "sea" of BN 68. The second possibility, sea as altar cavity containing the relics of Shenoute, remains and Quecke seems to favor it, but without pursuing the implications of this position.

Stefan Timm, in his description of the area around the White Monastery, makes use of BN 68, but does not accept sea/ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ as altar cavity for relics, merely stating that the explanation is unproven.[91] He uses the pilgrimage route of BN 68 to map the monastic and church sites around Atripe and concludes that the first destination (ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲥⲁⲙⲟⲩ) was the site where Shenoute's body was buried, which was not the White Monastery.[92] Timm might agree that the sea/ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ was at this site, but is uninterested in establishing its form or function. Yet a quick review of the procession to this point supports Timm and suggests the simplest interpretation of "sea." The pilgrims go up to the mountain, gather (4r), go north to the **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ** church (32r), recite scripture relating to "church" or "congregation" (37r), listen to Shenoute's sermon (50r–64v), and then walk to the sea/**ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ** (65r). After a break in the manuscript (87–92 missing), instructions for the celebration of mass are given, with readings appropriate to Lent, and after this the people "go down" (100r) to the monastery of Apa Shenoute (137r), and enter the church of the Virgin Mary and St. George.

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[87] Alfred J. Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (repr. Oxford 1970), 2.5, 16–17.

[88] Peter Grossmann, "Altar," *Coptic Encyclopedia*, 1.105–107.

[89] Quecke, *Untersuchungen*, 490 n. 15.

[90] References are to chapters in the Bohairic *Life of Shenoute*, ed. J. Leipoldt, CSCO 41 (Paris 1906).

[91] Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten*, 621–622.

[92] Ibid., 621.

If the first site, the **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ** church, is a shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary, founded by Shenoute, Pgol, and Pshoi—as argued above—then the simplest reading would place the sea/**ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ**, meaning some kind of receptacle for the remains of Shenoute, inside this church. Note that after the "walk to the sea/**ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ**" (65r), the title "our father, Apa Pshoi" (79r) precedes a series of hymns and biblical passages on the themes of fathers and elders. Nothing connects Pshoi to the pilgrimage except his place in the life of Shenoute, which includes building a church to honor the Virgin.

The location of this church is unknown, though Timm has boldly suggested an area three km south of the White Monastery, following de Bock who identified the place as the "mountain of Atripe."[93] The place is at a higher elevation than the White Monastery, farther into the desert, and includes a cave in the cliff face. But the cave itself would not have been suitable for the pilgrims' assembly, as Timm notes. Several problems could be solved if we linked the **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ** church to the meeting place of Shenoute, Pgol, and Pshoi, to the desert refuge of Shenoute, and then to the sea/**ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ** and his burial place. The *Life of Shenoute* (both Coptic and Arabic versions) frequently states that Shenoute retreated to a desert cell to pray: "Our father Apa Shenoute was in the cell in the desert ... because he was praying in those days for the river to flood."[94] The Arabic *Life* has many parallels; see Amélineau, *Vie de Schenoudi*, 315–316, 324, 330–331, 339. Leipoldt also discusses this aspect in *Schenute von Atripe*, 104. At times, monks from his monastery would go to the desert to find Shenoute because of pressing problems: "When we knocked, he answered us with difficulty after a long time."[95] Their statement suggests that there was some kind of a building in the desert retreat and that Shenoute used it for private prayer.

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[93] Timm, ibid., 621–622, citing de Bock, *Matériaux*, 68–70. And note the echo of the manuscript dedications to the "church on the mountain" and "the mountain of Atripe" collected by van Lantschoot; see n. 55 above for references.

[94] Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 122, ed. and trans. by David Bell.

The Arabic *Life of Shenoute* describes the burial of Shenoute in this way:[96]

> Everyone in the area gathered and we carried (his body) to the foot of the mountain ... buried it and returned to our home ... Later we exhumed his holy body ... We buried it where he said ... We put it in the place ... where I heard the Lord speak to him, that is, Jerusalem, the holy house where the angels gather.

In this account, Shenoute was first buried in an inconspicuous spot in the desert at the foot of the cliff (mountain) that borders the Nile Valley, perhaps following the models of Antony and Pachomius, who both wanted unmarked graves.[97] Later, his remains were exhumed and placed in the sanctuary of a church. Therefore the simplest interpretation of BN 68 would be that the sea/**ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ** of Apa Shenoute (65r) was a receptacle for his remains and that this was located in the **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲥⲁⲙⲟⲩ** church (32r), the Church of the Virgin Mary, where mass was celebrated (93r) before the pilgrims began to go down (100r) to the next station at the monastery of Apa Shenoute (137r).[98]

At this point, the confusing testimony of Abū al-Makārim[99] (writing 12th c.) must be considered. He states,[100]

> The body of the great saint Sinuthius ... was contained in a chest until the invasion of Egypt by Shirkuh and the Ghuzz who accompanied him, and who broke open the chest, and the body was taken out of it, and concealed in the ground in an unconsecrated chamber near the altar.

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[95] Besa, *Life of Shenoute* 102, ed. Bell. Also 31, 154, 160.

[96] *Life of Shenoute* 474, ed. Amélineau.

[97] See Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 91 and Greek *Life of Pachomius* 116.

[98] In this I agree with Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten*, 622, "Die erste Prozessionstätte, zu der man hinaufstieg und die Messe feierte, war vielleicht die, wonach Abū Sālih der Leichnam des Šenute begraben war."

[99] The correct identity of the author of the *History of Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, wrongly attributed to Abū Ṣāliḥ, is suggested by Aziz S. Atiya, "Abū al-Makārim," *Coptic Encyclopedia* 1.23. But for greater precision, see also Johannes den Heijer, "Coptic Historiography in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Periods," *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996):67–98, on the many layers of composition. By his persuasive argument, Abū al-Makārim would be one of several compilers of the basic text produced 1160–1187.

[100] Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, trans. by B.T.A. Evetts, with notes by

This invasion took place in the 1160s. If sea/**ⲑⲁⲗⲁⲥⲥⲁ** designates the "unconsecrated chamber near the altar" rather than a chest, which would be consistent with Burmester's account of Coptic church furnishings, then the specific rite of BN 68 would have been formulated after the 1160s. It seems more likely that a pilgrimage to the desert of Apa Shenoute, stopping at several sites, took shape much earlier and BN 68 incorporated older material. Abū al-Makārim is not clear as to the location of the body of Shenoute before and after it was disturbed. Is it in the White Monastery or some other church, in his account? He does not mention the **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲥⲁⲙⲟⲩ** church and seems unaware that Shenoute ruled a monastic domain of several houses, hermitages, and churches, not only the White Monastery.[101]

VI. *Down to the White Monastery*

It is apparent, however, that the procession turned to the White Monastery itself after the mass at the **ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲥⲁⲙⲟⲩ** church. The pilgrims "go down" (100r) to the accompaniment of "Greek hymns (psali) for the feast of the Lord and the feast of the desert" (124r).[102] Following the hymns are key words (lamps, guide, evening, moon, etc.) introducing scripture passages up to page 136 (with 132–133 missing). The selection of key words may show that the procession continues into the approach of evening. At 137r a new direction asks for "hymns as you go in at the door of the monastery of our

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Alfred J. Butler (Oxford 1895), 237. See n. 98 above for questions of authorship.

[101] Elm, *"Virgins of God"*, 299.

[102] **ⲯⲁⲗⲗⲉⲓ ⲛⲉⲗⲗⲉⲛⲓⲕⲟⲛ**, Greek hymns, is perhaps not the best translation since the *psali* are poetic refrains or hymns usually found in the liturgy of the hours. See Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West* (Collegeville, MN 1986), 255, and *Liturgy of the Hours in the Christian East* (Kerala 1983), 182; L.S.B. MacCoull, "Coptic Museum Ms. Lit. 3/2 Revisited," *Le Muséon*, 107 (1994):305–316; DeLacy O'Leary, "The Coptic Theotokia," *Coptic Studies in Honor of Walter Ewing Crum* (Boston 1950), 417–420; L. Villecourt, "Les observances liturgiques et la discipline du jeûne dans l'Église copte," *Le Muséon* 37 (1924):228. Villecourt, loc. cit., describes the use of such hymns in early twentieth century Palm Sunday processions in Upper Egypt: "Les gens du Sa'īd ont les ἑρμηνεῖαι et les δύφματα composés de psaumes de David que leur indique leur index appelé El-Kafūs. Ils en choisissent des extraits qu'ils chantent—chant prolongé, beau, adapté à chaque lieu près duquel ils passent—à tout ce qu'ils rencontient: fleuve, sable, colline, herbe verte, arbre ou autre chose." The *psali* were sung in this manner as the procession moved to the next station. The derivation of "*psali*" is disputed. E. Lanne, "La prière de Jesus dans la tradition égyptienne. Temoignage des psalies et des inscriptions," *Irénikon* 50/2 (1977):167 n. 2, derives it from ψάλιον, "chain."

holy father, Apa Shenoute." But can we safely identify the monastery of Apa Shenoute with the present-day site known as the White Monastery? First, Al-Maqrīzī (d. 1441), in his account of the churches and monasteries of Egypt, mentions the "monastery of Saint Sinuthius, also called the White Monastery."[103] At the time he wrote, the monastery complex was in ruins with only the church still standing. Secondly, after the procession is directed to the "gate of the monastery of Panopolis" (138v), while singing the Trishagion, the next instruction is to chant until you reach "the door of the church of the Virgin Mary and St. George" (139r). Otto Meinardus, in *Christian Egypt Ancient and Modern*, describes the "church of St. Shenute"—meaning the surviving remnant of the White Monastery—and notes that it has "three sanctuaries which are dedicated to St. George (north), St. Shenute (center) and the Blessed Virgin Mary (south)."[104] It is likely, therefore, that the procession has arrived at the White Monastery compound at 137r and all further directions in the extant manuscript refer to places in the compound. The church that now stands was once the center of a diversified settlement, as archeological investigation over the last century has shown. Somers Clarke describes the White Monastery compound in its original form:

> (The church) stood ... within a stout rectangular wall, enclosing a large area, and filled with the houses of the monks, with mills, barns, bakehouses, etc., forming altogether the monastery. The stone structure with which we now have to deal was the nucleus. It is really the old Egyptian town over again—a stone temple in the midst of a mudbrick town.[105]

The general outlines of the history of the White Monastery are known.[106] A church and monastery existed on the site—a slight rise in the desert just beyond the cultivated area—under Constantine and was ruled by Pgol, the uncle of Shenoute. In the Theodosian period, a new church and a larger settlement were built using materials from the old church and an abandoned pagan temple in Atripe. This work was directed by Shenoute and perhaps was supported by the same Count Caesarius addressed in some of Shenoute's writing.[107] Flinders Petrie's investigation of the site showed that the walls of the old cenobium were now extended to include the new church and new buildings appeared around the church.[108] This picture is confirmed by the modern archeological surveys reviewed by Grossmann: the brick buildings that once stood around the White Monastery were diverse, separate buildings.[109] The twelfth century account, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, summarizes the subsequent history of the White Monastery.[110] Following the Arab Conquest of Egypt in 642, records indicate that rulers visited the monastery in the eighth century. Armenian inscriptions can be dated to 1123 and the Armenian vizier visited the monastery in 1137. Abū al-Makārim states that the tomb of Shenoute was disturbed in 1168; but, as noted earlier,[111] this statement does not prove that Shenoute's remains were in the White Monastery in 1168. During reconstruction after an earthquake, a wooden roof replaced the brick dome, c. 1235–1259.[112] By the early fifteenth century, the monastery was in ruins and only the church remained.[113] Such was the case when European contact with, and exploration of, the White Monastery began with P. Wansleben in 1673.[114]

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[103] Al-Maqrīzī, cited in B.T.A. Evetts translation of Abu Salih, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, 317. See also A. Schmitz, "Das weise und das rote Klöster," *Antike* 3 (1927):330, for a review of older sources that identify the "Shenoute-monastery" with the White Monastery.

[104] Meinardus, *Christian Egypt*, 292.

[105] Somers Clarke, *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley* (Oxford 1912), 150.

[106] See Maurice Martin, "Dayr Anbā Shinūdah," *Coptic Encyclopedia* 3.761–766.

The pilgrimage procession enters the precincts of the White Monastery very close to the end of the extant manuscript (141v in BN 68; one additional page in Leiden numbered 158r–v).[115] Brief signposts are followed by hymns and liturgical excerpts: "enter the door of the monastery of Apa Shenoute" (137r); "arrive at the gate of the monastery of Panopolis" and sing the Trishagion (138v); "sing until you reach the door of the church of the Virgin Mary and St. George" and again sing the Trishagion (139r); "enter the church of the Virgin Mary, singing in this way" a hymn to the Virgin (139v); "enter the shrine of St. George" (140r), then repeat the Trishagion and another hymn to the Virgin Mary;[116] hymns continue "until you reach the portrait of St. George" (140v). The portrait (ⲗⲓⲙⲏⲛ)[117] seems to include a receptacle for the martyr's relics, because the prayer following on 140v describes its decoration with "every (type of) beauty," before it is placed in the saint's "martyrion." The saint is addressed directly ("O holy martyr George") and oil from the lamps at his shrine is confidently described as curing the illness and remitting the sins of those anointed with it. A formal ceremony of prayer and anointing may have taken place at this point in the procession. Various psali follow, introduced with key words (endurance, honor, crown) that probably honor St. George as martyr. At 141v, there is a brief command: "They come out, they say the doxis."[118] The continuous text breaks off and only one isolated page, 158r–v, survives in the Leiden collection.[119] This isolated page begins with lines from Psalms 89 and 101, probably the end of a longer list following the usual format of BN 68. The next command is to "recite the Matthew," meaning the passage from the gospel that follows, Matt. 17:9–13. The same passage—the Transfiguration—appeared much earlier in BN 68, at 8v–9v containing Matt. 17:1–9. On BN 68.158, the end of this passage, verse 9, is repeated and the story of the Transfiguration is carried along a little farther.[120] Since the end of the text is missing, we have no information on the final stages of the procession, but there may be a hint in the repetition of the Transfiguration scene. The gospel passage is first read near the beginning of the rite (pp. 8–9) and the entire scene on the mountain, involving Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, is included, ending with, "As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them ..." We have seen how the entire procession moved from place to place on the "mountain," the domain of Shenoute. Then on BN 68.158, when the gospel is read again, it *begins* with the reference to the mountain, "As they were coming down from the mountain ..." but continues with Jesus' explanation that Elijah has already come (v. 12) and ends (v. 13) with, "Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist." By repeating Matt. 17:9, attention is again drawn to "coming down from the mountain" and, by p. 158 of the text, this may have been the next aim of the procession. Repetition of the gospel would be an effective way to link the end to the beginning of the rite.

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[107] G. Lefebvre, "Deir-al-Abiad," *DACL* 4.462–502, discusses an inscription dated around 430 that was found at the monastery that supports this identification.

[108] W.M. Flinders Petrie, "Athribis," *British School of Archeology in Egypt* 14 (1908):15.

[109] Peter Grossmann, "Sohāg," *ArchOr* 25 (1974–77):324. See also H. Evers and R. Romero, "Rotes und weises Kloster bei Sohag. Probleme der Rekonstruktion," *Christentum am Nil*, ed. Klaus Wessel (Recklinghausen 1964), 186, suggesting that the church was originally open to the sky, like an Egyptian temple, with a roof added at a later date.

[110] Abū Ṣāliḥ, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, see n. 98 above for a discussion of authorship.

[111] See pp. 24–29 above, where I argue that BN 68 implies that the remains were in the ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ church.

[112] Ugo Monneret de Villard, "La fondazione del Deyr el-Abiad," *Aegyptus* 4 (1923):156–162, and *Les couvents pres de Sohag* 1.31.

[113] Lefebvre, "Deir-al-Abiad."

[114] Ibid.

[115] W. Pleyte and P. Boeser, *Manuscrits coptes du Musée d'Antiquités des Pays-Bas à Leide* (Leiden 1897).

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[116] This hymn contains the revealing phrase ⲧⲏⲥⲡⲓⲛⲁ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ, "lady without experience of marriage," which I have used to identify the church visited earlier in the procession.

[117] ⲗⲓⲙⲏⲛ (portrait, image) has received an unusual amount of attention from Coptic scholars. Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 143a, notes that it is not to be confused with the Greek λιμήν, harbor, but cannot point to its derivation. It seems to be a loanword thoroughly assimilated to Coptic through a vowel shift. James Drescher, "Graeco-Coptic: Postscript," *Le Muséon* 89 (1976):307–21, derives it from Greek λαίμος/λαιμίον, "throat." Gérard Godron, "ⲗⲓⲙⲏⲛ Image, Portrait," *BSAC* 25 (1983):1–53, derives it from Latin *lumen* (light). In a later article, "À nouveau ⲗⲓⲙⲏⲛ (complements)," *BSAC* 29 (1990):43–47, Godron added evidence. The most recent study, by Youhanna Nessim Youssef, "La terminologie de l'icône selon les livres liturgiques coptes," *GM* 158 (1997):101–5, shows that ⲗⲓⲙⲏⲛ is an icon, meaning cult *object*, whereas ϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ can be a statue, physical appearance, or the concept of the image of God.

[118] This "doxis" is a Greek prayer beginning "Heavens of heavens ..."

[119] W. Pleyte and P. Boeser, *Manuscrits coptes*, 244–246.

VII. *Conclusion: BN 68 in brief*

The end of the procession cannot be reconstructed in any detail. But the main outlines of the surviving text are clear: assemble, process to a church containing the relics of Shenoute, celebrate mass, process to his main monastery for special prayers, and (probably) return from the mountain. Shenoute, in spite of his strong objections to the popular cult of the martyrs, was drawn into the broad trend toward rendering the holy tangible.[121] His relics are the focus of the procession, because the main liturgy takes place near them.

The rite in BN 68 supports a new understanding of Shenoute as head of the White Monastery. The existence of another very important focus of devotion—the ⲉⲧⲣⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲩ church with his relics—supports the view, already sketched by Elm, that Shenoute ruled a monastic domain or empire, not just one monastery.[122] He supervised monks and nuns in cenobitic communities, some located in villages, and in desert hermitages, all within a few miles of the White Monastery.

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[120] Matt. 17:9 appears on both pages with minor spelling variants only: ϩⲟⲣⲟⲙⲁ 9v/ϩⲱⲣⲟⲙⲁ 158r, ⲙⲡⲣ̄ϫⲱ 9v/ⲙⲡⲉⲣϫⲱ 158r. On 8v–9v the gospel has an Arabic translation in a parallel column, while 158r–v is in Coptic only.

[121] Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, and Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, both analyze this trend.

[122] Elm, *"Virgins of God"*, 229.

The exact place of this rite in the history of the Egyptian church is harder to define. The evidence provided by the medieval historians implies that Shenoute's relics were kept in a church up to the time of the disturbances caused by Turkoman forces in the 1160s and that the White Monastery was in ruins by 1450. At best we can say that the pilgrimage to the desert of Apa Shenoute evolved after his death (464/465) and was carried on until major disturbances came to the area from the twelfth century on. This manuscript, produced in the 15th–16th centuries, was therefore copied at a time when the rite could not be carried out, in part because some of the sites were completely gone and forgotten. The modern feast of St. Shenudah is not a pilgrimage procession.[123] Much work remains if the historian is to extract all possible evidence from BN 68 and improve our understanding of monastic developments around Atripe and Shenoute's role as ruler of a diverse domain.

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[123] Maraval, "Pélerinages chrétiens" (above, n. 38).

V

BEYOND PILGRIMAGE, BEYOND EGYPT

"OUTSIDE THE PLACES, WITHIN THE TRUTH": ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE LOCALIZATION OF THE HOLY

David Brakke

In 561 the remains of Antony the Great, the monastic hermit who died in 356, were discovered in Upper Egypt and translated to Alexandria. When the Arabs conquered Egypt in the next century, Antony's bones were moved to Constantinople, where they remained until 1070, when the Byzantine emperor sent them to southern France. There Antony's remains became the focus of a church and a hospital devoted to the cure of ergotism or Saint Antony's fire.[1] None of this comes as any surprise to the historian of Christianity, for the rise and elaboration of cults devoted to the bodies or body parts of holy persons, whether ascetics or martyrs, are well-known features of Late Antique and medieval Christianity. The cult of the saints formed an essential component of the process by which post-Constantinian Christians reconstituted their world by locating the holy in specific persons and places. The construction and promotion of holy places in Palestine coincided with the elaboration of the martyr cult as Christians sought to re-imagine the ambiguous past as leading to their seemingly triumphant present.[2] The career of Antony's body is an unexceptional example of this widespread phenomenon.

But readers of Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria's *Life of Antony* will note the irony of a cult surrounding Antony's remains, for in the final chapters of that work Athanasius portrays Antony as dying and being buried in a secret location, one known only to two of Antony's disciples. Antony withdraws to this remote spot precisely so that there would be no cult surrounding his body. Christian corpses, Antony declares, should be buried in the ground and left there until the resurrection.

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[1] See G.J.M. Bartelink's introduction to Athanasius, *Vie d'Antoine*, ed. Bartelink, SC 400 (Paris 1994), 74–76.

[2] R.A. Markus, "How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places," *JECS* 2 (1994):257–71.

It is probably impossible to say whether Antony himself actually held this opinion, but it is entirely consistent with the views of Athanasius as he expressed them in several writings throughout his career, which ran from 328 to his death in 373. The cult of the holy dead, pilgrimage to the Holy Land, indeed the very notion of a holy land—Athanasius displayed little enthusiasm for any of the practices by which fourth-century Christians carved out spaces for the sacred. While other fourth- and fifth-century bishops, such as Ambrose and Augustine, were able to integrate the localization of the holy into their spiritualities—indeed, to use it to enhance their own episcopal power and prestige—Athanasius did not, and there is some irony in this as well. For one might argue that Athanasius' theology, which emphasized the divinization of the human body accomplished by the divine Word's assumption of human flesh, contributed substantially to the ideological basis for such practices as pilgrimage and martyr cults. All of this makes Athanasius somewhat of a puzzle in his own context: why was he so out of step with his fellow Christians and even with the implications of his own thought?

In this essay I shall describe the evidence for Athanasius' ambivalence about the localization of the holy and offer diverse explanations for it, ranging from the theological to the political to the biographical. I have appended English translations of three particularly significant but relatively neglected documents in this regard, a fragmentary letter of Athanasius to his supporters preserved in Latin and his 41st and 42nd *Festal Letters* preserved in Coptic. Athanasius' commitment to a radically Logos-centered theology, his experiences of exile, his optimism about the new Christian era, his conflicts with Melitians and Jews—all of these were factors in Athanasius' lack of enthusiasm for holy bodies and places. I shall follow roughly the chronology of Athanasius' written thoughts on these topics by starting with holy places, then turning to holy persons, whether they were alive or present only in their corpses. Despite the diversity of explanations and materials, one persistent theme will emerge: that Athanasius, who battled all his life for certain ideas, mapped holiness cognitively, as a function of right belief in the incarnate Word, not locatively, as a function of God's continued presence on earth.

I. *"Locus an Fides?"*

The roots of Athanasius' attitude toward holy places can be found in his early work (ca. 336?), *On the Incarnation of the Word.* Here we find a striking optimism about the effects of the Word's incarnation: pagan religion, including magic, is on the wane; nations are giving up warfare; young men and women are choosing virginity in astonishing numbers.[3] Like other Christian authors of the fourth and fifth centuries, the young Athanasius constructed a narrative of triumphant Christianization, in which the decisive victory of Christianity over paganism had been won centuries earlier in Christ's incarnation: the current decline of traditional religion only made this heavenly victory clear on earth.[4] In its Athanasian version, this narrative carried a corollary: everything that belonged to the pre-incarnational era, including Palestine and Judaism, had been definitively superseded. Thus, in a tradition that began with the Letter to the Hebrews, the earthly city of Jerusalem and the Temple that once stood in it were merely "patterns" or "shadows" of the spiritual realities present in Christ and heaven; their destruction by Titus in 70 CE and Hadrian in 135 was a sign that the Word of God had come, and that the era of the Mosaic legislation was therefore at an end.[5] Athanasius writes:

> A sign and great proof of the coming of God the Word is this: no longer does Jerusalem stand, nor does a prophet arise, nor is vision revealed to them—and rightly so. For when he who was signified has come, what need is there of those that signify? When the truth is present, what need is there of the shadow? For this reason they prophesied until Righteousness itself should come and he who absolves the sins of all; and for this reason Jerusalem stood for so long, in order that they might first meditate there on the patterns of the truth. Therefore, since the holy of holies is at hand, rightly have vision and prophecy been sealed, and the kingdom of Jerusalem has ceased.[6]

Here Athanasius' narrative of triumph gets the better of him: although certainly "the kingdom of Jerusalem" (the pre-Roman temple state) had ceased, it was true only in a rhetorical sense to say that Jerusalem itself "no longer stands," for a city certainly did stand on the same site—one renamed Aelia Capitolina that was rapidly becoming filled with Christian buildings of all kinds. Thus, years later, in his *Letter to Adelphius* of around 360, the older Athanasius limited his remarks explicitly to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, which he took to be the pattern for the human flesh in which the incarnate Word dwelled "as in a temple."[7] The new Christian era was not tied to particular places in Palestine or to a particular people, the Jews; rather, Christianity was universal, spiritual, heavenly. Christian truth was the signified; Palestinian geography, merely the dispensable signifier.

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[3] *Inc.* 46–55.

[4] Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge 1995), 4–7.

[5] For more on the political context of this belief, see Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Berkeley, CA 1983), 128–60, and *idem*, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven/London 1992).

[6] *Inc.* 40.4–13; ed. R.W. Thomson, *Athanasius: Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford 1971).

This typological theme, in the form of a polemic against continued Jewish observance of the Passover, appears numerous times in the *Festal Letters*, where Athanasius assimilated it to his "pattern"/ "reality" view of religious history. According to him, the Jews should have realized that, since their political state had "had an end," the "time of shadows" was over, and they should give up celebrating that Passover which was only a pattern for the real Passover, Christian Easter; but, by failing to realize that the earthly city of Jerusalem was merely a pattern for the heavenly city, the Jews "read the Law outwardly" and so "fell short" of the "heavenly Jerusalem."[8] Christians, by contrast, should not "go up to the lower Jerusalem to sacrifice the Passover" since the Gospel had been preached everywhere and knew no geographical limits. It was "in every place," not just one.[9] Freed from geographical particularity, Christians could "go up to Jerusalem" wherever they lived through the spiritual purification of the forty-day fast.[10] They were "children of the higher Jerusalem, of which the one that Solomon built was a pattern."[11] In fact, God's restriction of the Jewish Temple and its sacrifices to only one city, Jerusalem, indicated their temporary character.[12] In these passages, there seems little room for the earthly Jerusalem to continue to have spiritual significance, except as a sign of the end of the era of Jewish law and festivals.[13] On one level, Athanasius' belief that the earthly Jerusalem and its Temple had been merely anticipatory patterns for the heavenly Jerusalem and the incarnate Word's flesh was a theological idea that he simply inherited from Alexandrian theology. In line with Alexandria's predilection for spiritual and allegorical realities, Athanasius associated a piety oriented toward specific geographical locations in this world with the time before the incarnation; the benefits of the Word's incarnation were spiritual, leading to a heavenly commonwealth, not tied to any specific people or place.

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[7] "And yet the former temple was constructed of stones and gold, as a shadow; but when the reality came, the type then ceased, and there did not remain, according to the Lord's utterance, one stone upon another that was not broken down (cf. Matt. 24:2)"; *Ep. Adelph.* 7 (*PG* 26.1081A).

[8] *Epp. fest.* (syr.) 1.7–9 (ed. W. Cureton, *The Festal Letters of Athanasius* [London: 1848], 17.13–18.19); (cop.) 24 (= 2) (CSCO 150: 38.27–32; 39.16–20).

[9] *Ep. fest.* (syr.) 4.4 (Cureton 34.18–35.10).

[10] *Ep. fest.* (syr.) 6.12 (Cureton 63.14–15).

[11] *Ep. fest.* 45 (Cosm. Ind. *Top.* 10.13.3–4; ed. W. Wolska-Conus, *Topographie chrétienne*, SC 197 [Paris 1973]).

[12] *Ep. fest.* (syr.) 1.7 (Cureton 17.10–12).

But Alexandrian allegory and spiritualizing exegesis were not innocent of political and cultural motives.[14] Could Athanasius' polemic have reflected actual social and political conflicts with contemporary Jews in Alexandria over claims on Palestine and its significance, over biblical interpretation, and over which Passover, Christian or Jewish, was the real one?[15] This question is difficult to answer because, apart from scattered documentary papyri, little evidence survives from Jews themselves about their numbers and activities in Alexandria and Egypt after the disastrous revolt of the early second century.[16] The church historian Socrates reports that around 415, some forty years after Athanasius' death, there were multiple synagogues in Alexandria and that the Christian bishop Cyril led Christian gangs in anti-Jewish violence that drove many Jews from the city.[17] During Athanasius' career as well the city was frequently rocked by violent clashes among religious factions.[18] Athanasius himself claims that some of the testimony against him at the Synod of Tyre in 335 came from Jewish witnesses and that Jews as well as pagans participated in the riots that accompanied the government's efforts to place Christian buildings in the control of Athanasius "Arian" opponents in 339.[19] Moreover, Athanasius' Easter letters display a persistent anxiety that some Christians may actually consider the Jewish version of Passover to be the legitimate biblical tradition or, in Athanasius' words, that Christians would be tempted "to betray the truth through Jewish thoughts and myths."[20] Athanasius was attempting to establish a certain mode of celebrating Easter, including a forty-day fast, and the continued Jewish observance of Passover was a living critique of his liturgical program.[21] These signs point to real social conflict with Jews in a tumultuous city where Christians were not yet a majority and Athanasius did not command the allegiance even of all the Christians.

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[13] Cf. the attitude of Eusebius of Caesarea as described by P.W.L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford 1990).

[14] David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley, CA 1992).

[15] This question is raised without an answer by Annick Martin, *Athanase d'Alexandrie et l'église d'Égypte au IV^e siècle (328–373)*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 216 (Rome 1996), 691, n. 210, *et passim.* I hope to return to this question in the future and test further the hypotheses offered in the next two paragraphs.

[16] On Jews in Alexandria during the fourth century, see Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven/London 1971), 39–53, and Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore/London 1997), 91–127. On Jews in Upper Egypt, see Roger Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993), 275–78.

[17] Soc. *hist. eccl.* 7.13; see Haas, *Alexandria*, 295–316.

[18] This violence is now instructively explored by Haas, *Alexandria.*

How did Athanasius make sense of this persistent Jewish presence or, as he saw it, threat? Although he occasionally refers to the Jews as disobedient or as having a "will" that is "not right,"[22] he far more often characterizes them as "ignorant" or "senseless" (ἀγνώμων).[23] That is, when they read the Scriptures, they do not "understand" them; they "fail to recognize" certain truths, and so their "thoughts are led astray."[24] Such complaints were not new, but rather date back to such second-century works as the *Epistle of Barnabas* and Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*.[25] To Athanasius, because the Jews did not read the Septuagint christologically, they were "fleshly" instead of "spiritual."[26] Likewise he called Jewish Passover meals "irrational nourishment" since they consisted of the meat of senseless animals rather than the body of Reason incarnate, Jesus the Word.[27] The

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[19] *Apol. c. Ar.* 83; *Ep. encycl.* 3.

[20] *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 25 (CSCO 150: 14.4–5).

[21] Scholars disagree over whether it was Athanasius who introduced the forty-day pre-Easter fast into Egypt, most likely during or after his first exile in the West (where he could have observed the custom). For a brief sketch of the debate, see T.D. Barnes, in *JTS*, n.s. 41 (1990):260–62. In any event, a letter from Athanasius to Bishop Serapion of Thmuis transmitted in the Syriac tradition between *Festal Letters* 11 and 13 (Cureton 82–84) and written either in 336 or in 339, as well as *Ep. fest.* (syr.) 6.12, indicates that the forty-day fast was not the norm in Egypt and so required special arguments from the patriarch.

[22] *Ep. fest.* (syr.) 6.5 (Cureton 44.10–11).

[23] *Epp. fest.* (cop.) 24 (= 2); 27 (CSCO 150: 38.27; 45.30–46.8).

[24] *Epp. fest.* (syr.) 11.5 (Cureton 74.11–75.3); (cop.) 24 (= 2) (CSCO 150: 38.27–29).

[25] Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 12–15.

[26] *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 24 (= 2) (CSCO 150: 38.33).

[27] *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 24 (= 2) (CSCO 150: 39.20–30).

Jews, then, are like a person "deranged in his thinking" who cannot understand what is obvious,[28] and this is why Athanasius can say that the Jews "taught the Arians,"[29] who similarly are unable or unwilling to read the Bible with understanding. In this way, Athanasius understood his Jewish opponents to be similar to all his other enemies; for him, they were, in essence, Christian heretics, or at least the model for all Christian heretics. And thus a holy land, that is, devotion to geographical and ethnic particularity in a manner he thought characteristic of Jews, was itself a heretical idea for Christians.

A fragment preserved in Latin provides a similar example of how political conflict with so-called heretics shaped how Athanasius thought of holy places.[30] Athanasius wrote this letter to his followers at a time when, he says, "others have obtained the churches (*ecclesiae*) by violence" and the Athanasians have been "cast out from your places (*loca*)." The most plausible context for these remarks is the imperial deliverance of the Alexandrian church buildings to Athanasius' opponents in 356.[31] Violence accompanied this turnover, and Athanasius himself was forced to flee into the desert and hide. The result of these events, the bishop told his followers, was that the Arians "possess the places, but you the apostolic faith." Athanasius then muses, "Let us consider which is the greater, the place or the faith (*locus an fides*)." Posed in this way, the question has an obvious answer: "Clearly the true faith," for "the place is good when the apostolic faith is preached there; it is holy if the Holy One dwells there." In other words, the holiness of a place depends on the orthodox faith of the persons currently occupying the place. Athanasius illustrates this point with the Jerusalem Temple at the time of the Babylonian exile:

> Recollect that the Temple indeed was in Jerusalem; the Temple was not deserted [at the time of the Babylonian exile], but foreigners had invaded it. Hence, the Temple truly was in Jerusalem, but those who were exiled went down to Babylon by the judgment of God, who was proving or rather correcting them, while manifesting to them, in their ignorance, punishment (by means of) blood-thirsty enemies. And foreigners

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[28] *Inc.* 40.39–41 (Thomson).

[29] *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 37 (CSCO 150: 14.24–25).

[30] *PG* 26.1189–90. All of the quotations in this paragraph are from these columns. A new English translation follows this essay.

[31] Archibald Robertson, *Select Writings and Letters of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria*, *NPNF*, 2d ser., 4.550 n. 7.

> indeed possessed the place, but they were ignorant of the Lord of the place. Inasmuch as he neither gave answer nor spoke, they were deserted by the truth (*a veritate desolati*). What profit, then, is the place to them?

Thus, a place in and of itself is of no intrinsic value. The important thing for the Christian is not be in any particular place, but to be "within the truth." A place, meanwhile, is holy only if God dwells there by virtue of its occupants' correct faith. Athanasius wrote these words during his own "Babylonian exile," one more of his repeated removals from the "places" of the church; these places were now in the hands of the Arian "foreigners." Athanasius' confused version of the events of 587 BCE, mistakenly asserting that the Jerusalem Temple was not destroyed but rather occupied by the invading Babylonians, shows the extent to which the bishop has conformed the biblical story to his own experience. Athanasius says that his own Babylonian conquerors, the Arians, "think that they are within the truth (*intra veritatem*), but they are really exiled and held captive" because of their heretical theology. Because this line of thought does not lend itself easily to a case for the return of the churches to the Athanasians, Athanasius switches to the story of Christ's cleansing of the Jerusalem Temple and charges the Arians with turning "the holy place" (!) into "a den of thieves." The implication is that the Arians, like the moneychangers of Jesus' day, ought to be removed from the sanctuary.

Athanasius' several experiences of exile from the church buildings of Alexandria understandably shaped how he thought about the status of earthly locales. A holy place, by Athanasius' definition, was not spatially or geographically circumscribed, but rather determined spiritually or intellectually by the presence or absence of the "orthodox" way of thinking, the "truth." Athanasian Christians may have been "outside the places," but they were "within the truth." By extension Athanasius gave no sign of believing that God dwelled in the Jerusalem of his own day in any special manner.

This internalization of the holy appears also in Athanasius' second *Letter to Virgins*, which he wrote to female ascetics who had returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and probably dates to the last decade of the bishop's career.[32] The bishop depicts the virgins as believing that the biblical sites that they had visited were filled with the divine presence and so as grieved at their separation from Palestine. Athanasius, in his effort to console the virgins, expresses a less enthusiastic view of such a journey to the holy places: he says that an actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem, although acceptable, is not needed to experience Christ's presence.[33] The ascetic life can make any person anywhere a "temple" for Christ. Here Athanasius' desire to seclude Christian virgins in private lives of prayer dovetails with his usual ambivalence about holy places: if the virgins seek holiness, they should seek it within themselves and within the Athanasian church.[34]

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[32] The letter is edited and translated into French by J. Lebon, "Athanasiana Syriaca II: Une lettre attribuée à saint Athanase d'Alexandrie," *Le Muséon* 41 (1928):169–216. An English translation appears in David Brakke, *Athanasius and the*

Athanasius' ambivalence about the emerging Christian Holy Land, about pilgrimage there, and indeed about any holy places can be traced to several factors, such as his understanding of the universal and spiritual character of Christianity, his conflicts with a lively Jewish community, his own experiences of exile from ecclesiastical places, and his efforts to limit the public activities of ascetic women. But there remains one overriding theme: holiness is to be located not in any place, but only in orthodox faith and virtuous living.

II. *Displacing Antony*

Athanasius' concern about whether and where holiness was to be located also shaped his attitudes toward the bodies of monks and martyrs. His first attested public thoughts on this subject appear in the *Life of Antony*, written, as was the fragment on the "places" and the "truth" that I discussed earlier, in the years following the Arian takeover of church buildings in Alexandria in 356. The entire *Life* may be seen as Athanasius' attempt to show what a contemporary "holy person" or "saint" ought to be; it is the bishop's programmatic statement on the exemplary ascetic, not a reliable report of the life and teachings of the historical Antony. It is not possible here to describe fully Athanasius' portrait of the ideal "saint," except to

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Politics of Asceticism, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford 1995), 292–302. On the letter's authenticity and date, see David Brakke, "The Authenticity of the Ascetic Athanasiana," *Orientalia* 63 (1994):17–56, at 25–27.

[33] Cf. Susanna K. Elm, "Perceptions of Jerusalem Pilgrimage as Reflected in Two Early Sources on Female Pilgrimage (3rd and 4th centuries AD)," *Studia Patristica* 20 (1987):219–23.

[34] Brakke, *Athanasius*, 22–44.

say that the bishop explicitly characterizes the monk's supernatural abilities to heal and to exorcise as actually the works of God the Word through Antony, and he presents Antony primarily as a figure worthy of moral imitation.[35] In his preface to the work, Athanasius explicitly states that his goal is to present Antony's "way of life" as a "sufficient image" for the addressees to "imitate."[36] Thus, everything that Athanasius' Antony does is meant to be, for the reader, an exemplary action to be imitated, including "what the end of his life was like."[37]

Athanasius' explicit goal of presenting Antony's death as exemplary must be interpreted in reference to two kinds of readers: monks and lay people. At the heart of the issue is how monastic and lay readers ought to relate to each other and to a superior monk such as Antony, especially after his death: Athanasius' answer is through remembering and imitating the monk's example, not through physical contact with the living monk or the dead monk's remains. Athanasius signals this agenda at the end of chapter 88, just before he begins the narrative of Antony's death in chapter 89: "People would come to Antony even from foreign lands: they too, with all the others, received benefit and returned, as if sent off by a father. No doubt when he died, they all, like orphans deprived of a father, consoled themselves only with his memory, preserving both his admonitions and his exhortations."[38] These foreign pilgrims have "only" their memory of Antony and his teachings, no relics, and this memory is sufficient.

This telling detail sets the stage for Athanasius' emphasis on the disappearance of Antony's body. Athanasius has Antony, at the end of his life, depart to a secret place to die, lest people mummify and otherwise honor his corpse:

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[35] For discussions and citations, see Brakke, *Athanasius*, 245–62, and Rowan A. Greer, *The Fear of Freedom: A Study of Miracles in the Roman Imperial Church* (University Park, PA/London 1989), 104–07. The best brief analysis of the *Life* as illustrating Athanasius' anthropology and soteriology is Johannes Roldanus, "Die *Vita Antonii* als Spiegel der Theologie des Athanasius und ihr Weiterwirken bis ins 5. Jahrhundert," *Theologie und Philosophie* 58 (1983):194–216.

[36] *V. Ant.* pref. 13–21 (SC 400).

[37] *V. Ant.* pref. 10; 89.1–3 (SC 400). For an excellent analysis of Athanasius' description of Antony's death, see Monique Alexandre, "A propos du récit de la mort d'Antoine (Athanase, *Vie d'Antoine. PG* 26, 968–974, §§ 89–93). L'heure de la mort dans la littérature monastique," in *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Age—III^e–XIII^e s.*, ed. J.-M. Lereux (Paris 1984), 263–82.

[38] *V. Ant.* 88.14–19 (SC 400).

> When the brothers were pressing Antony to stay with them and to die there, he would not for many reasons, as he indicated by keeping silent, but especially for this reason. The Egyptians like to honor with funeral rites and to wrap in fine linens the bodies of the zealous ones who have died, and especially those of the holy martyrs, but they do not bury them under the ground; rather, they place them on stretchers and keep them inside among themselves, supposing that in this way they honor those who have departed. But Antony often demanded that the bishops command the people concerning this, and he shamed the laity and chastised the women, saying that it was neither lawful nor pious to do this. For the tombs of the patriarchs and prophets are preserved until today, and the body of the Lord himself was placed in a tomb, and a stone was placed there and hid it until he arose on the third day. And by saying these things, he showed that person transgresses who does not after death bury the bodies of the departed, even if they happen to be holy. For what is greater or holier than the Lord's body? And so many people, when they heard this, thereupon buried their dead under the ground and gave thanks to the Lord that they had been taught so well.[39]

In the following chapters, Antony explicitly instructs two of his disciples not to "permit anyone to take my body into Egypt, lest they stow it away in houses"; only the two monks are to know where Antony's body is buried, "for I will receive it back from the Savior incorruptible at the resurrection of the dead."[40] Antony's wishes are carried out by the two anonymous monks. It is not the case, however, that no physical remains of Antony survive, Athanasius is careful to tell us, for Antony instructs the monks to give two of his "sheepskins" to two prominent Christian leaders: Athanasius himself and Athanasius' close ally, Bishop Serapion of Thmuis. Each bishop, Athanasius says, keeps his sheepskin "like a great treasure, for even seeing them is like beholding Antony, and wearing them is like bearing his admonitions with joy."[41] Like the foreign pilgrims, these bishops recall Antony's teachings, but they have the advantage of possessing in these relics physical *aide-mémoire.*

The practices that Athanasius has Antony condemn, mummification of corpses and their preservation—even display—in private homes or church buildings, were traditional Egyptian customs surrounding dead family members. Egyptian Christians continued these practices and extended them particularly to the most valued members of the Christian "family": monks (as Athanasius calls them here, "zealous ones") and martyrs.[42] The original motivations for these behaviors must have been simply, as Athanasius puts it, "to honor" the dead person as well as to continue, after his or her death, the special position that the hero held in the Christian community during his or her lifetime. It is telling that Athanasius attributes this practice to "the Egyptians," for this term suggests both an Alexandrian's condescending attitude toward Egyptians up the Nile and an association in the bishop's mind of the preservation of bodies with traditional Egyptian religion and culture, that is, "paganism."[43] Two addition factors require attention: the status of Antony's body, and the politics of legacy possession.

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[39] *V. Ant.* 90.1–21 (SC 400).
[40] *V. Ant.* 91.27–37 (SC 400).
[41] *V. Ant.* 91.37–44; 92.9–14 (SC 400).

In the passage quoted at length above, Athanasius says that the bodies of the dead ought to be buried, "even if they happen to be holy," admitting that some Christians' bodies are, in fact, "holy." How so? The status of Antony's body in the *Life* is a complex issue that cannot be fully explored here, but in sum, because Antony successfully subordinates his personality to the guidance of God the Word, his body anticipates the incorruption that Christians' bodies will enjoy after the resurrection.[44] This theme first appears early in Antony's career when the young monk successfully resists the devil's attempts to dissuade him from the ascetic life through the pleasures of wealth, family life, and sex. Antony's victory is achieved *in* his own body, but *through* Christ: "Working with him (Antony) was the Lord, who bore flesh for our sake and gave to the body the victory over the devil, so that each one who truly strives says: 'It is not I, but the grace of God that is with me' (1 Cor. 15:10)."[45] Antony then inures himself in "one of the tombs," precisely where Antony later says human bodies ought to be buried; there Antony suffers much

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[42] For description and evidence, see Theofried Baumeister, *Martyr Invictus*, Forschungen zur Volkskunde 46 (Münster 1972), 51–86; cf. Carl Schmidt, "Ein altchristliches Mumienetikett, nebst Bemerkungen über das Begräbnisswesen der Kopten," *ZÄS* 32 (1894):52–63.

[43] On the origins of the martyr cult in Egypt, its roots in traditional Egyptian religion, and the value of martyr bodies to Egyptian Christians, see David Frankfurter, "The Cult of the Martyrs in Egypt Before Constantine: The Evidence of the Coptic *Apocalypse of Elijah*," *VC* 48 (1994):25–47.

[44] Brakke, *Athanasius*, 239–44; cf. Alvyn Pettersen, "Athanasius's Presentation of Antony of the Desert's Admiration for his Body," *Studia Patristica* 21 (1987):438–47.

[45] *V. Ant.* 5.39–43 (SC 400).

"pain in his body" and appears like "a corpse" to his friends. Nonetheless, "the Lord," who has "enfeebled" the devil, comes to Antony's aid (as "a certain ray of light"), bringing his bodily pain to an end; indeed, Antony "felt that he had more strength than before in his body."[46] The scene can be read as an allegory of the Christian body's death, burial, and resurrection by Christ's power. Behind Athanasius' presentation of Christ and Antony's body lies his belief, which he first articulated in his two-volume work *Against the Nations/On the Incarnation*, that humanity's moral and physical corruption stemmed from its failure to keep the body subordinate to the soul and the soul subordinate to the Word of God, a failure aggravated by human beings' fear of death; only the Word's incarnation in and perfect guidance of a human body could provide the victory that would enable people to find courage in the face of death, to regain moral control of their bodies, and at last to enjoy complete incorruption (moral and physical) at the resurrection.[47] Antony's battles with the death-dealing demons and with his body's weakness in the tombs plays out Christ's victory over the tomb.

Antony's ascetic career, then, represents a process in which the Word's victory over moral and physical corruption in general is secured in Antony's own body in particular. This process reaches its climax when Antony spends twenty years alone in a deserted fortress, a voluntary seclusion ended by the desire of others to imitate his ascetic zeal:

> After this, when many desired and wanted to imitate his discipline, and other friends of his came and by force tore down and removed the door, Antony emerged as if from some shrine, initiated into the mysteries and filled with God ... When they beheld him, they were amazed to see that his body possessed its customary condition and was neither obese, as if untrained, nor withered, as if from fasts and combat with demons, for it was just as they had known him before his withdrawal. The disposition of his soul was pure again, for it was neither contracted by distress, nor dissipated by pleasure, nor constrained by levity or dejection. For when he saw the crowd, he was not disturbed, nor did he rejoice to be greeted by so many people. Rather, he was wholly balanced (ἴσος), as if navigated by the Word (ὑπὸ τοῦ Λόγου κυβερνώμενος) and existing in his natural state. Therefore, the

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[46] *V. Ant.* 8–10 (SC 400).

[47] Roldanus, "*Vita Antonii* als Spiegel," 203–10; see esp. *Gent.* 3.22–31; *Inc.* 27.1–30.2 (Thomson).

> Lord healed many of the suffering bodies of those present through him, and he cleansed others of demons.[48]

This Antony is the ideal Athanasian human being, for nearly all of this language finds parallels in other Athanasian writings that describe the goals of Christian discipline.[49] This Antony, then, is not a general "holy man," but rather, the ideal Christian, a person shaped by a particular relationship to the Word of God. Antony's soul has recovered its likeness to the Word and, as a result, has regained proper control over the body. This restored moral relationship between body and soul appears in the body itself as an immunity to corruption and an ability to be beneficial to other human bodies through healings and exorcisms. Transformed within a tomb-like seclusion, Antony's body both recalls humanity's lack of corruption before the fall and anticipates the full restoration of that condition in the resurrection, which Antony understands to be the reunion of the soul with a now completely "incorruptible" body.[50] The astonishing vitality of the aged Antony's body—"he had not lost one of his teeth"—indicates that the monk did not waver in his "enthusiasm for the discipline."[51]

Apart from its function as a living sign of the resurrected body and the power of God's Word, the ascetic's body has no meaning for those see it; rather, it is merely "naked" and a source of "shame." Antony's body may have amazed the spectators as he emerged from the fortress, but otherwise "no one saw him stripped, nor did anyone ever see Antony's body naked, except when he was buried after he died."[52] Elsewhere in the narrative, the great monk Amoun likewise not only does not want his colleague Theodore to see him naked, but also he "was ashamed even to see himself naked."[53] Among the crimes of the evil Roman general Balacius was that he "stripped monks"; Christ, in turn, defeated Satan by "stripping" him.[54] For Athanasius nudity signified humanity's loss of God's image, its vulnerability to evil and to Satan. Adam and Eve's nakedness in the Garden represented that they were "naked of the contemplation of divine things"; Satan was able to attack Judas successfully because he found him, unlike Job, "naked" of good thoughts.[55] The exposed body, one not enveloped by the power of the Word or encased in a tomb, is a source of nothing but shame, a sign of humanity's weakness.

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[48] *V. Ant.* 14.3–21 (SC 400).

[49] Brakke, *Athanasius*, 242–43.

[50] *V. Ant.* 16.27–28; 91.35–37 (SC 400).

[51] *V. Ant.* 93.1–17 (SC 400); Alexandre, "L'heure de la mort," 264–65.

[52] *V. Ant.* 47.11–13 (SC 400).

[53] *V. Ant.* 60.18–20 (SC 400).

[54] *V. Ant.* 86.5; 41.20 (SC 400).

Thus, from Athanasius' perspective, it is correct to call Antony's body "holy," but only in the sense that it has been restored to its original (pre-fall) condition through the divinizing work of the incarnate Word. Antony's body is not holy in the sense that it transmits or mediates holiness to others. One story makes explicit that physical proximity to Antony or contact with his body is unnecessary even for healings associated with him:

> A certain young woman from Busiris in Tripoli suffered from a terrible and extremely pitiful condition: when her tears, mucus, and discharges from her ears fell to the ground, they immediately became worms. Even more, her body was paralyzed, and her eyes were abnormal. Her parents had faith in the Lord who healed the woman with the flow of blood (Mark 5:25–34 par.), and so when they learned about some monks who were going out to Antony, they asked that they might go with them and bring their daughter, and the monks consented. The parents and the child remained outside the mountains with Paphnutius, the confessor and monk, while the others went in. Just as the monks were about to tell Antony about the girl, he beat them to it and told them all about the girl's illness and how she had traveled with them. Still, when they asked that these people be allowed to come in, he would not permit it, but said, "Go, and you will discover that she has been healed, unless she is dead. For this achievement is not mine so that she should come to me, a pitiful human being. Rather, healing belongs to the Savior, who bestows his mercy everywhere (ἐν πάντι τόπῳ) on those who call upon him (cf. Jer. 24:9; Amos 8:3; Wisd. 4:15; Ps. 144:8). Therefore, it is to that girl's prayer that the Lord has consented, and it is to me that his love for humanity has revealed that he has healed the girl's illness where she is." In this way the miracle happened, for when they went out, they found the parents rejoicing and the girl completely healthy.[56]

Here Athanasius undermines localization of the holy in either place or body: Antony merely announces God's benefits to humanity, which happen to faithful Christians "everywhere." The allusion to the Synoptic account of the hemorrhaging woman sharpens the point: while the biblical woman touched Jesus and was healed, the girl from

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[55] *Gent.* 3.20–21 (Thomson); *V. Ant.* 42.32–35 (SC 400); cf. *Ep. fest.* (syr.) 3.3 (Cureton 28.1–4), a striking parallel.

[56] *V. Ant.* 58.1–25 (SC 400).

Busiris does not even see Antony. Clearly Antony's body is not holy as Christ's was. In another sense, Athanasius' allusion replicates an ambiguity in the New Testament story, which is most pronounced in Mark: the author assumes that Jesus' body is charged with power—Jesus is "aware that power had gone forth from him" (Mark 5:30)—but then displaces the transaction away from the physical contact: "Daughter, your faith has made you well" (Mark 5:34). Antony's role in his healing is similarly ambiguous: Athanasius ironically places Antony's geographical marginality and inaccessibility at the center of his plot.

Indeed, although the *Life* carefully maps Antony's movement from the heart of the settled land to the extreme isolation of the inner mountain, it consistently undermines any attempt to locate Antony definitively in any place, culminating in his lack of a known grave site. Much of the tension in the narrative derives from Antony's resistance to the "pressure" (βία) by which he is "dragged" (ἑλκόμενος) from his mountain retreat back to the villages and thus to contact with people.[57] A monk among people, Antony tells a military commander harassed by locals in need of Antony, is like a fish out of water: he cannot survive long.[58] The cumulative affect of such scenes is not so much to construct a new holy place, the desert, as it is to displace holiness from concrete encounters between particular bodies at particular places to a more universally available relationship of prayer to a "Savior, who bestows his mercy everywhere on those who call upon him."

Although the Word's victory in Antony does have miraculous benefits for others, ultimately their own saving divinization depends not on contact with Antony or his body, but on their own ascetic appropriation of the Word's victory in imitation of Antony, either through full monastic withdrawal or a moderate program of lay asceticism.[59] For this task what one needs is not Antony's body, but what this *Life* provides: "his memory, preserving both his admonitions and his exhortations."[60] The sick as well should be content with this: "The sufferers received even the words of the old man as healing and learned not to be negligent, but to be patient. And those who were healed were taught to give thanks not to Antony, but to the Lord alone."[61] It is the Word of God, not Antony himself, who is the source of divine aid and salvation in Athanasius' "Logos-centric" theology. As Athanasius puts it in Chapter 90, "What body is greater or holier than the Lord's?" Moreover, for Antony himself, his receiving of his body back fully "incorruptible" at the resurrection requires burial of it in imitation of the burial of the Word's own body before his resurrection, as Antony himself tells his two monastic disciples.[62] Athanasius does not elaborate on this latter point, which is a common theme in early Christian literature on burial, but it seems that he worried about how God would raise dead bodies that were not buried.[63] For these theological reasons, Athanasius believed that preservation of the monk's body above ground did no good for others, who needed only his example, and may actually have been detrimental to the deceased monk, who needed a whole body for the resurrection.

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[57] *V. Ant.* 84.8; 85.1 (SC 400).

[58] *V. Ant.* 85.1–16 (SC 400).

[59] Athanasius presents his moderate program of asceticism for lay Christians, a paler imitation of Antony's discipline (almsgiving, moderate fasting, etc.), in his *Festal Letters* and other writings; see Brakke, *Athanasius*, 182–98.

[60] *V. Ant.* 88.18–19 (SC 400).

It was, of course, also politically convenient for Bishop Athanasius that, at least when he was writing his biography, no independent cult surrounding Antony's body yet existed. This situation enabled Athanasius to portray any such cult as against Antony's wishes and to promote alternative "relics" of the deceased monk, specifically ones possessed by himself and another bishop. In general, Athanasius presents an Antony who, no matter how far he removes himself from the settled land, always remains connected to and submissive to the Athanasian episcopate.[64] The confidant with whom Antony shares his most sensitive visions is Bishop Serapion of Thmuis, one of Athanasius' most important allies in the Egyptian church.[65] It is upon these two bishops, Athanasius and Serapion, that Antony is made to bestow his mantle of authority. "To Bishop Athanasius," the dying Antony tells his companions, "give the one sheepskin and the garment on which I lie, which he gave to me new, but which has grown old with me. And to Bishop Serapion give the other sheepskin, and you keep the hair shirt."[66] While Antony's monastic disciples receive the hair shirt that symbolizes Antony's ascetic discipline, it is Athanasius and Serapion who receive Antony's garments of authority, just as Elisha received the garment of Elijah (2 King 2:12–14).[67] The anonymity of the two monks, who disappear into the past, highlights the naming of the two bishops.[68] Like the two monks, Antony's body disappeared, but Bishops Athanasius and Serapion are still able to see and wear his clothing, an experience of "joy" that everyone else can learn about by reading the *Life*.[69]

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[61] *V. Ant.* 56.8–12 (SC 400).

[62] *V. Ant.* 90 (SC 400).

[63] Common theme: Alfred C. Rush, *Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity*, Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity 1 (Washington, DC 1941), 247–53. For a discussion of the development of notions about the resurrection in relation to the rise of asceticism and the relic cult, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336*, Lectures on the History of Religions, n.s. 15 (New York 1995), 104–14.

[64] *V. Ant.* 67.1–11 (SC 400).

[65] *V. Ant.* 82.7–12 (SC 400).

Athanasius, however, later attempts to erase his own authoritative role in constructing this picture of Antony and his body. At the end of the *Life*, Athanasius explains that, like the gospel message celebrated by the young bishop, Antony's reputation now transcends the geographical particularity of place, but this is God's work, not his own:

> It is proof of Antony's virtue and of his soul's friendship with God that he is proclaimed everywhere, that he is the object of everyone's amazement, and that even those who have not seen him long for him. For Antony has become famous not through writings, nor through external wisdom, nor on account of any skill, but solely because of his piety. That this was a gift of God no one will deny. For how did news about a man who settled and was hidden in a mountain make it to Spain and Gaul, how to Rome and Africa, unless it was the God who makes his own people known everywhere who promised this also to Antony at the beginning? For even if they work in secret, even if they want to be ignored, still the Lord reveals them like lamps to all people, so that in this way those who hear might know that the commandments can be performed successfully and so receive zeal for the path to virtue.[70]

Nevertheless, it was primarily through this literary work itself, written for "the monks in foreign places,"[71] that Antony became no longer located in Egypt, but "proclaimed everywhere." Just as he transforms Antony from located person into proclaimed saint, Athanasius none too subtly marks Antony's translation from body to text: "This was the end of Antony's life in the body, and the preceding has described the beginning of his discipline."[72] By separating Antony both from his place in Egypt and from his own body, the narrative displaces Antony into itself.

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[66] *V. Ant.* 91.38–42 (SC 400).

[67] Brian Brennan, "Athanasius' *Vita Antonii*: A Sociological Interpretation," *VC* 39 (1985):209–27, at 223–24.

[68] Alexandre, "L'heure de la mort," 275, n. 22.

[69] *V. Ant.* 92.13–14 (SC 400).

[70] *V. Ant.* 93.17–32 (SC 400).

[71] See the discussion of surviving titles in SC 400: 124–25.

III. *Wandering Bodies, Wandering Minds*

Similarly inseparable theological and political themes run through *Festal Letters* 41 and 42, written for 369 and 370, in which Athanasius condemns a variety of practices surrounding the bodies of martyrs.[73] These two letters belong to a series of *Festal Letters* that Athanasius wrote during the years 367–70, all of which deal with matters of church order: the biblical canon, irregular ordinations, and the like. It would be misguided to treat the problems in these letters solely in terms of theology; rather, each of these issues was a matter of social organization and conflict, including necrological practices.[74] Here too we will find Athanasius displacing holiness from places and bodies to orthodox thinking and an orthodox text, the Bible.

In *Festal Letter* 41 (Easter 369), Athanasius condemns the display of martyr corpses for reasons similar to those espoused in the *Life of Antony*, but here the bishop also makes explicit the political basis for his opposition to the martyr cult. In a rhetorical ploy typical of ancient school polemics, Athanasius lumps together all his opponents—"Jews," "Arians," "Melitians," and "the heretics"—into a single stigmatized group of the other: "they" as opposed to "we." At the return of Christ, these two groups will be fully segregated:

> Therefore, since *we* have been now been invited through the gospel to the great and heavenly banquet, into the swept upper room (cf. Luke 22:12), "let us purify ourselves," as the Apostle commanded,

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[72] *V. Ant.* 93.1–2 (SC 400).

[73] These letters survive only in fragments of their Coptic translation published by L.-Th. Lefort, *S. Athanase: Lettres festales et pastorales en copte*, CSCO 150 (Louvain 1955), 23–9, 62–5, and by R.-G. Coquin, "Les lettres festales d'Athanase (CPG 2102). Un nouveau complément: Le manuscrit IFAO, copte 25," *OLP* 15 (1984): 133–58. Since there is not yet a critical edition that combines this evidence, I shall indicate from which edition each citation is taken. An English translation of these letters concludes this essay.

[74] For a general treatment of the social dimensions of burial in antiquity, see Ian Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge 1992). On the social background of *Festal Letter* 39 (367), see David Brakke, "Canon Formation

> "from every defilement of the flesh and the spirit, completing purification in fear of God" (1 Cor. 7:1), so that, being found spotless internally and externally—externally, clothed with wisdom and righteousness; internally, "rightly proclaiming the word of truth" in the Spirit (cf. 2 Tim 2:15)—*we* might hear, "Enter into the joy of your Master" (Matt. 25:21). But *they* who have fallen away from this joy, whether the Jews of old or the people of recent times, will hear in shame, "Friend, how did you enter this place without a wedding garment?" (Matt. 22:12) And *they* will remain strangers to the festival.[75]

Here the present-day separation of the Athanasian Christians from all other groups during the Easter season and the exclusion of heretical others become necessary preparations for the ultimate separation of "them" from "us" at the close of the ages. Athanasius' term "them" combines a variety of groups, Christian and non-Christian, whose only common element is that they are not affiliated with Athanasius' church. This sharp division of Egyptians into two groups had no place for ordinary Christians who had a more fluid sense of religious affiliation. For example, some Christians were not Melitians, but would "commune with them." Such distressingly mobile persons, Athanasius charged, were "defiling themselves with the dead."[76] The metaphor was carefully chosen, for it appears that these nominally Athanasian Christians were attracted to Melitian parishes by practices involving dead bodies:

> They (the Melitians) have not left hidden in the earth the bodies of the martyrs who contested well, but they try to put them on stretchers and pieces of wood so that those who want to can view them. They do this with pomp, as if on account of the martyrs' honor, but truly this is a contemptible thing, and they do it for a shameful reason. For indeed they do not have the bodies of martyrs in their city, nor do they know which is a martyr, although they have taken counsel to blaspheme their bodies and take them from the cemeteries of the catholic church. In fact, those who have already been buried they exhume and carry out, so that, since they are put to shame for deny-

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and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt: Athanasius of Alexandria's Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*," *HTR* 87 (1994):395–419; of *Festal Letter* 40 (368), Brakke, *Athanasius*, 99–102. On the present letters, see Alberto Camplani, *Le Lettere festali di Atanasio di Alessandria: Studio storico-crico* (Rome 1989), 272–74; this work is basic to the study of the *Festal Letters*.

[75] *Ep. fest.* 41 (Cosm. Ind., *Top.* 10.7.4–12 [SC 197]; Coquin, *IFAO Copte* 25, f. 10v, a.4–14).

[76] *Ep. fest.* 41 (Coquin, *IFAO copte* 25, f. 9v, b.4–16).

> ing him whom the holy martyrs confessed, they might, even through their (the martyrs') bodies, find a way to deceive those whom they lead astray.[77]

From here Athanasius adduces biblical examples, culminating in Jesus himself, of persons whose bodies were buried in the ground and left there.[78] The similarities of this passage to Antony's speech against mummification in the *Life of Antony* are striking. These include the reference to putting the bodies on stretchers, the acknowledgment that people do all this for the "honor" of the martyrs, and the use of Jesus and the biblical prophets and patriarchs as examples of persons whose dead bodies were buried and left in the ground.[79] But in the decade since Athanasius wrote the *Life*, the cult of the dead must have considerably proliferated, for no longer does he see it merely as a superstitious remnant of paganism; rather, it appears also as the site of bitter conflict among Christians.

In Egypt, the martyr cult had become the arena for a struggle over which church, Athanasius' or the Melitians', was the genuine successor of the pre-Constantinian martyr church.[80] In the passage above Athanasius denies that his opponents have any genuine martyr bodies or even know "which is a martyr"; hence, they must move such genuine bodies to their churches. How did the Melitians and others support the authenticity of their martyr remains? In the surviving fragments Athanasius does not explain how a martyr's corpse was discovered if it was not simply exhumed from a previously known grave. Some possibilities are suggested in a sermon of Shenute on the martyr cult that shows knowledge of Athanasius' *Festal Letters* on the topic. Shenute quotes Christians who offer explanations ranging from chance ("It happened that while we were digging in the ground we found some martyr bones.") to revelation: "Certain martyrs appeared to us and told us where their bones are."[81] In light of the claims to divinatory revelations through the martyrs found in *Festal Letter* 42 (to be discussed below), the latter appears highly probable.

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[77] *Ep. fest.* 41 (CSCO 150: 62.23–63.5).

[78] Adam, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Joseph, "the prophets," "the Lord": *Ep. fest.* 41 (CSCO 150: 23.22–24.30).

[79] *V. Ant.* 90 ("the patriarchs and prophets," "the Lord"); cf. Alexandre, "L'heure de la mort," 269–70.

[80] Cf. L.-Th. Lefort, "La chasse aux reliques des martyrs en Égypte au IV^e siècle," *La nouvelle Clio* 6 (1954):225–30, at 225.

[81] E. Amélineau, ed., *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* (2 vols.; Paris: 1907–14), 1.212–20, at 212.

Meanwhile, Athanasius charges that his opponents, even if they have real martyr bodies, now betray the very Christ "whom the martyrs confessed" by succumbing to Arian doctrines.

These arguments by Athanasius suggest that his opponents were successful in using the bodies of martyrs to legitimate their network of parishes as that church which truly existed in continuity with the now legendary persecuted church of an earlier golden age.[82] Their efforts anticipated Ambrose of Milan's more celebrated translation of the relics of Saints Gervasius and Protasius to his basilica in 386.[83] Athanasius, however, did not oppose this program with the same strategy by moving martyr bodies to the parish churches associated with him: rather, he condemned all exhumations. Athanasius instead tried to establish continuity with the historic church of the martyrs through "orthodox" doctrine, continued right belief in "him whom the martyrs confessed." He thus charged the Melitians with recycling an old Arian and pagan error: "they worship the creature more than the one who created everything, God" (cf. Rom. 1:25).[84] Athanasius' focus remained on proper confession of God the Word.

In line with this focus, Athanasius used the physical movement of martyr bodies and the Christians attracted to them as a map for the more insidious movement away from orthodox doctrine toward heresy. Bodies on stretchers were, to him, distressingly mobile; they could be "carried out" of the "catholic" church and so "lead astray" unsuspecting Christians. Wandering, errant bodies could only lead to wandering, errant minds. Recall that, during his exile of 356–62, when Athanasius and his allies had been removed from the church buildings of Alexandria and other cities, the bishop had told his followers that holiness was not to be found in any place; rather, it belonged only to those people who are "within the truth." Now a decade or so later, when Athanasius was more in control of such places, he could more closely associate orthodox faith with the gathering of persons into actual physical locations. Martyr bodies ought to remain fixed in the ground in these places. Thus, while Athanasius sought to consolidate Egyptian Christians into a single social unit with a single faith, he portrayed his opponents as leading people off into "small groups":

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[82] On this function for the martyr cult, see R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge 1990), 90–95.

[83] Markus, *End of Ancient Christianity*, 143–45.

[84] *Ep. fest.* 40 (CSCO 150: 62.14–15).

> Therefore, neither the Jews nor the Arians nor the Melitians nor the heretics share in the festival ... just as the Apostle wrote: "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). He did *not* say: "Our portion is divided up for *small groups* of people, for it is not fitting for us to proclaim it." Rather, it belongs to *everyone* to say like the Apostle, "Nothing will *separate* us from the love of Christ" (Rom. 8:39). God testifies to these things to *everyone*: "You are with me always" (Luke 15:31). Moreover, he promises them *all together*, saying: "You are the ones who have endured with me in my trials. I myself establish for you, as my Father established for me, a kingdom, so that you will eat and drink with me at my table in my kingdom" (Luke 22:28–30).[85]

In this letter Athanasius' rhetorical strategy is to contrast his language of unity and cohesion ("we," "us," "all together," "everyone," "catholic church") with a picture of fragmentation and separation ("they," "them," "separate," "small groups," "heretics") and to associate mobile bodies on stretchers with the latter. He portrays the movement of martyr bodies as a movement away from the integrity of "catholic" truth toward the fragmentation of heterodox error.

Here it is useful to recall that the traditional Egyptian practice in the Hellenistic period was to keep a mummified corpse in the private home.[86] This observation suggests how in Christian Egypt, as elsewhere, the martyr cult could become, as Peter Brown has put it, "a zone of conflict" between the "centrifugal" force of privatized funerary practices centered around the home and the "centripetal" force of the church's communal life centered around the bishop and his altar.[87] It is this kind of social conflict, both between private and communal cultic practices and between competing cultic communities ("Melitian," "Athanasian," "Arian," and so on), that Athanasius phrased in terms of unity and fragmentation, orthodoxy and heresy. Even more, while Brown developed his model to understand developments in the Western churches, the Egyptian situation was more complex. In the West Ambrose and Augustine presided in cities that formed natural centers for the consolidation of religious cultures in surrounding suburban and rural areas, and thus they could exploit the "discovery" and translation of relics to central basilicas as positive support for their episcopal authority. In Egypt the bishop of Alexandria faced an Egyptian society spread thinly along the length of the Nile to his south, a geographical and cultural terrain less amenable to such "centripetal" use of holy bodies.

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[85] *Ep. fest.* 41 (Coquin, *IFAO Copte* 25, f. 9v, b.23–f. 10r, b.5).

[86] Baumeister, *Martyr Invictus*, 56.

[87] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago 1981), 31–32.

Nor is this all: there was money involved. A primary means by which the developing imperial episcopate established and maintained its power was through control of the church's money and welfare system. The bishop became the patron of ordinary Christians and of parishes in his diocese.[88] It would appear that the martyr cult undermined this economic patronage by the bishop, for Athanasius accuses those who exhume the bodies of martyrs of doing so "for the sake of financial gain."[89] Where holiness goes, so goes the money of the faithful. Thus, Athanasius returns to a charge that he had used a decade earlier in his letter on the Arian occupation of church buildings and equates his current efforts to stop martyr cult activities with Christ's cleansing of the Temple:

> This (practice of exhuming martyrs' bodies) resembles the crookedness of Jeroboam, who sold <the priesthood, and of those who sold> and bought doves in the Temple of God, as it is written (1 Kings 12:31; Matt. 21:12–13; par.). Indeed, it is clear without a doubt that those who are lawless now and are being driven out by whippings are the ones to whom the Lord said: "Do not make my Father's house a house of trade" (John 2:16). They too will hear him say: "Do not sell the body of my martyrs, and do not make their good confession profitable for the sake of greed." For those who commit such a sin must receive the same punishment.[90]

Some scholars may still doubt that, early in his career, Athanasius sponsored violence in his campaign against the Melitian church, as a famous papyrus suggests.[91] Here it does indeed appear that the older Athanasius cited the Bible to sanction explicitly violence ("whippings", "the same punishment") against those who, as he portrayed it, trafficked in martyr relics.

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[88] Egyptian church orders reveal a continuing effort to consolidate the church's financial organization and welfare system around the bishop and his assistant, called "the steward" (*The Canons of Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria* 16, 61, 81, 89, ed. and trans. W. Reidel and W.E. Crum, Text and Translation Society 9 [London 1904], 26–88, 40–1, 50, 55–56); cf. Annick Martin, "L'église et la khôra égyptienne au IV^e siècle," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 25 (1979):3–26, at 7–11, 22–23; Charles Bobertz, "Cyprian of Carthage as Patron: A Social Historical Study of the Role of Bishop in the Ancient Christian Community of North Africa" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1988); Haas, *Alexandria*, 222–26, 249–58.

[89] *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 41 (CSCO 150: 26.9–10).

[90] *Ep. fest.* (cop.) 41 (CSCO 150: 26.10–20). I have accepted Lefort's conjectural restoration as well as his suggestion that Athanasius understood 1 Kings 12:31 to refer to simony on Jeroboam's part (cf. *Apol. Const.* 28; CSCO 150: 26, n. 80).

[91] *P. Lond.* 1914 was published by H.I. Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt* (London 1924). For Athanasius as a violent "gangster," see T.D. Barnes, "The Career of Athanasius," *Studia Patristica* 21 (1987):390–401, esp. 393–99. For a defense of

If the 41st *Festal Letter* concerns where holiness is to be located, then the 42d concerns where truth is to be located, for here Athanasius takes on the practice of using martyr corpses for divination and exorcisms. Athanasius states categorically that, if exorcisms take place at the tombs of martyrs, it is Christ who performs them, not the martyrs. It would appear that Christians who went to martyr shrines for exorcisms or those who orchestrated them justified this practice with reference to biblical passages such as Acts 16:16–18, in which Paul, not Christ, casts out a demon. Athanasius replies:

> Let them listen, and I will answer them by saying that they are not healed by the martyrs coming upon the demons, but they are healed by the Savior, the one whom the martyrs confessed. And the demons cry out because they are being tortured by *him*, just as those in the gospel cried out, saying: "I beg you, do not torture us!" (Luke 8:28; etc.) But they try to see the demons that are destroying them! These people give glory to them (the demons) and ask them about what will happen. After these words, will they dare to question the unclean spirits? Yes, they will dare, for they are shameless lovers of pleasure.[92]

Athanasius does not deny that successful exorcisms take place in the martyrs' tombs, but insists only that they be attributed not to the martyrs, but to Christ, a strategy that the bishop used in the *Life of Antony* when he declared that Antony's miracles were not his, but God's or Christ's.[93] But unquestionably wrong to Athanasius' mind is the interviewing of possessed persons "about what will happen": divination. This, Athanasius claims, is the real reason why his opponents go to martyr shrines: not to see Christ's power over the demonic, but "to see the demons" and ask them questions. How precisely this divination was thought to work is not clear. In the passage cited above, it would seem that people believed that they were questioning the demons themselves, who then responded. But later Athanasius suggests that the people considered the demons to be "the martyrs'

Athanasius against charges of violent conduct, see Duane W.-H. Arnold, *The Early Episcopal Career of Athanasius of Alexandria*, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 6 (Notre Dame, IN/London 1991), 62–89.

[92] *Ep. fest.* 42 (CSCO 150: 65.4–15).

[93] *V. Ant.* 37, 48, 56, 58, 62, 65, 84.

prophets" and so believed that the martyrs or even Christ spoke "through the demons," who functioned then only as mouthpieces.[94]

In any case, Athanasius condemns this questioning of possessed persons as the seeking of truth apart from its revelation in the Word of God. When Christ expelled demons, Athanasius points out, he silenced them, "not because they were lying—for what they said, that he is Son of the holy God, is true—but so that they would not deceive the people through these words and then later teach them about their own doctrines."[95] In other words, even if a possessed person should, under the influence of a martyr's holiness or of a demon's ability to spy out matters,[96] say something true about the future, this, Athanasius claims, is only a seductive first step toward heretical doctrines. Once again movement from orthodox thinking to heresy is what concerns the bishop.

Athanasius does offer the Christians who seek information at martyr shrines "orthodox" modes of divination: direct contact with the Word of God either through a revelation from Christ or through the Bible. Christians with understanding "would call upon Christ, who is within themselves, and wait until he reveals what they are seeking, either in a dream or by speaking in their heart, and they would not run to the demons."[97] In several of his other works Athanasius explains that, through a disciplined life of virtue that includes ascetic practices, especially fasting, persons can reach such "purity of soul" that they can either perceive things beyond normal human ability or receive special revelations from God, particularly while sleeping.[98] In the *Life of Antony* he develops this point in a manner similar to his argument in this *Festal Letter*. He has Antony exhort:

> Moreover, should they (the demons) pretend to prophesy, let no one be persuaded. For often they tell us days in advance about brothers who are to arrive after some days, and those persons do come. They do this, not because they are concerned about those who hear, but so that they might persuade people to trust in them and so that then, once they have these people under control, they might destroy them.

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[94] *Ep. fest.* 42 (CSCO 150: 65.31–66.1).

[95] *Ep. fest.* 42 (CSCO 150: 28.3–7).

[96] Athanasius explains how demons, using their ability to travel long distances quickly, can appear to predict the future accurately in *V. Ant.* 31–35.

[97] *Ep. fest.* 42 (CSCO 150: 66.3–7).

[98] Brakke, *Athanasius*, 250–52.

> Therefore, it is necessary that we pay no attention to them, but defeat them even while they are speaking, for we have no need of them.[99]

Just as in our *Festal Letter*, Athanasius grants the possibility that demons may accurately prophesy, but considers this only a ruse to get people's trust and so undermine their faith. And just as in our letter, he has Antony offer a more direct, although more difficult, route to divination: "I believe that a soul that is completely pure and in its natural state is able, because it has become clear-sighted, to see more and farther than the demons, since it has the Lord revealing things to it."[100] In addition to calling upon Christ and awaiting a revelation from him, Christians—perhaps ones of insufficiently pure souls—may also consult the Word of God in the Bible: "We are strangers to the demons since we have the prophets."[101] The Word of God speaks not only through dreams and in the heart, but also through the words of the biblical authors, found only in the canonical books that Athanasius established three years earlier.[102] Perhaps a fleeting reference to the possibility that the martyrs might "act as ambassadors in their (Christians') behalf to God" indicates a third mode of divination, in which the martyrs truly act as intermediaries between human beings and the divine King,[103] but Athanasius does not develop such a notion either here or elsewhere in his extant works. His firm principle remains: "Because we worship the Word of God who speaks from heaven, we do not need those who speak from earth."[104] Truth, as Athanasius portrays it here, is to be found only in Christ, the single "Word of God who speaks from heaven," through revelations to pure souls and through the biblical canon; the competing revelations in the martyr cult are merely multiple voices that "speak from earth."

Athanasius' theological "Logos-centrism," combined with his political interests in a unified and catholic church, ruled out divine revelations that took place apart from this canonical Word. While pilgrimage to the new Holy Land appeared to Athanasius as merely unnecessary in the new "spiritual" Christian era, the martyr cult represented the pernicious persistence of old pagan habits resistant to the new regime of truth: it was practiced by "Egyptians" and was "appropriate to idolatry."[105] Whether as mobile bodies on stretchers or as divine oracles, dead martyrs could represent alternative sources of truth and holiness, and thus were best left safely in the ground.

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[99] *V. Ant.* 31.1–8 (SC 400).

[100] *V. Ant.* 34.7–11 (SC 400).

[101] *Ep. fest.* 42 (CSCO 150: 66.20–21).

[102] On the connection between the problems with the martyr cult and Athanasius' formation of a biblical canon, see Brakke, "Canon Formation," 410–17.

[103] *Ep. fest.* 42 (CSCO 150: 66.13); Brown, *Authority and the Sacred*, 73–74.

[104] *Ep. fest.* 42 (CSCO 150: 66.22–23).

Athanasius' ambivalence toward the localization of the holy was consistent throughout his long career and reflected some of his deepest theological commitments and his most critical political struggles. As a young bishop writing in the first decades of the new imperial church, Athanasius could see the places of Palestine as only reminders of a shadowy, pre-incarnational past and glimpses of a glorious heavenly future. Present reality was a triumphant, international Christian faith. Polemic against the Jewish observance of Passover, a seemingly more biblically legitimate rival to his program of Christian Easter, led him to denigrate as heretical the alleged "ignorance" of Jewish literalism and likewise to condemn ethnic and geographical particularity in favor of a spiritualized, universal Christian orthodoxy. Years later he expressed little enthusiasm for pilgrimage by female virgins to the Holy Land: their journey to God ought to be spiritual; their lives, spent in seclusion. Similarly, Athanasius created a textualized Antony the Great, who belongs in neither place nor body, but in the memory constructed in his biography. Athanasius' Logos-centrism and his struggle with the Melitians made him suspicious of the growing cult of the holy dead, yet another enticing lure away from orthodoxy toward heresy. Continuity with the pre-Constantinian church of the martyrs was to be achieved through confession of the orthodox faith in the Word for which the martyrs died, not through possession of or devotion to their corpses. To be sure, in this as in other matters, Egyptian Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries ignored the teachings of their acknowledged hero. But this would hardly have bothered Bishop Athanasius, who perhaps was happiest when most people disagreed with him. The embattled defender of Nicene doctrine was content to remain "outside the places" as long as he was "within the truth."[106]

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[105] *V. Ant.* 90.3–5 (SC 400); *Ep. fest.* 42 (CSCO 150: 66.16–17); cf. Brown, *Authority and the Sacred,* 20–25 on Augustine.

[106] This essay has benefited from discussions of earlier versions at the Midwest Patristics Seminar in Chicago, the Late Ancient Studies Forum at Duke University, and a colloquium of faculty and doctoral students in religious studies at Indiana University, and from the comments of J. Albert Harrill and Roy Hammerling. The

FRAGMENTARY LETTER TO HIS SUPPORTERS (356?)[107]

Here begins a letter of St. Athanasius, bishop of the Alexandrians, to his children:

May God indeed console you, for I know that not only this grieves you, but also the fact that others have obtained the churches through violence, while you have been thrown out of the places: so they possess the places, but you the apostolic faith. Although they are in the places, they are thrown out of the true faith; although you are truly thrown out of the places, the faith is truly in you. Let us consider which is greater, the place or the faith. Clearly the true faith. Who, then, has lost more? Or rather who has more: the person who possesses the place or the one who possess the faith? The place is good when the apostolic faith is preached there; it is holy if the Holy One dwells there.

And after a little bit:

But blessed are you who by faith are in the Church, who dwell on the foundations of faith, who find it sufficiently satisfying to have the highest proportion of the faith, which remains unshaken among you. For it came to you from apostolic tradition, and frequently cursed envy has wished to shake it, but has not been able to do so. Rather, they have been cut off (from it) through their attempts to shake it. For this is what is written: that Peter by a revelation of the Father confesses, "You are the Son of the Living God," and he hears, "Blessed are you, Simon bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven," and so on (Matt. 16:16–17). Therefore, no one will ever "prevail against" your faith, most beloved brothers and sisters (Matt. 16:18). For if God should at last give back the churches—and we think he will—and even if there is no such return of the churches, the faith is sufficient for us.

Now, lest I appear to speak violently by not referring to the scriptures, it is good to bring you to the testimonies of the Scriptures. Recollect that the Temple indeed was in Jerusalem; the Temple was not deserted, but foreigners had invaded it. Hence, the Temple truly was in Jerusalem, but those who were exiled went down to Babylon by the judgment of God, who was proving or rather correcting them, while manifesting to them, in their ignorance, punishment (by means of) blood-thirsty enemies. And foreigners indeed possessed the place, but they were ignorant of the Lord of the place. Inasmuch as he neither gave answer nor spoke, they were deserted by the truth. What profit, then, is the place to them?

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final section ("Wandering Bodies, Wandering Minds") expands and revises my "Athanasius and the Cult of the Holy Dead," *Studia Patristica* 32 (1997):12–18, and is reprinted here with the kind permission of Peeters Publishers.

[107] The text is found in *PG* 26.1189–90 and was translated into English earlier in Robertson, *Select Writings*, 550–51. The emphasized words are the comments of the anonymous scribe of the manuscript.

And now look: those who possess the place are accused by those who love God of making it "a den of thieves" and "a house of business" (Mark 11:17 par.; John 2:16) and of insanely making the holy place a house of arbitration for themselves, persons who had not been allowed to enter it. For, most beloved, we have heard these things and much worse from persons who have come from there. Therefore, by however much effort they appear to possess the church, so much the more have they been ejected (from it). And they think that they are within the truth, but they are really exiled and held captive. And there is no profit in the church alone, for the truth of matters will be discerned.

Festal Letter 41 (369)[108]

The 42d [*sic*] Letter of the blessed Athanasius.[109]

The time of the festival has come again, O brothers and sisters, which is "always" among us who "rejoice in the Lord," as it is written (Phil. 4:4). But now it urges everyone through him who was sent to proclaim, "Judah, celebrate your festivals! Pay your vows!" (Nah. 1:15) For yearly we bring the fruit of our actions to the Lord, who has commanded them, with a pure conscience, as in a farming vessel, according to the custom of our ancestors.

Moreover, once again we are going to be healed by being given to drink from the source of salvation (cf. John 4:13–14). And because we cling to the grapevine of the Lord, since we are its branches (cf. John 15:5), and "strain forward to what lies ahead" (Phil. 3:13), we will not be disobedient to the one who says, "Keep the new month, and celebrate the Passover of the Lord your God" (Deut. 16:1). For the Passover does not come from human beings, but from God, and it is his sign of the ancient things and the revelation of the new things.

Because the Jews do not understand this, they have remained alien to the festival. But if they had not gone astray, they would have recognized the Lord of glory (cf. 1 Cor. 2:8). Even the Law condemns their ignorance: for if it had been merely written, "You shall celebrate the Passover," then they would have found a fitting excuse for their adding hypocrisy to their shamelessness. But he added this word, "You shall celebrate the Passover of the Lord your God," and so brought their trickery to naught by making clear that it is not simply such a commandment, but a kind of a work to be completed for God.

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[108] The fragments of the Coptic text are edited by Coquin, "Les letteres festales," 133–58, at 146–52, and Lefort, *Lettres festales*, 23–26, 62–64. Alberto Camplani is preparing a new critical edition of the *Festal Letters*, which will take into account all manuscripts and language versions. In the meantime translations such as this one must remain provisional.

[109] The numbering is a mistake of the Coptic scribe; see Coquin, "Les letteres festales," 135.

For the commandments that are written—"You shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness" (cf. Exod. 20:14–16); and the rest that are to be fulfilled by us—are commanding us to set right our soul and to acquire a pure way of life. For the reward for these things is "the crown of the upward call" (Phil. 3:14). But the Passover is proclaiming him to us, so that we might remember the salvation that came in him and is completed in a lamb, and without him there could be no Passover. Therefore, each of the commandments happens through us, but the Passover happens through him. [...]

For it is not the blood of the lamb alone that hinders the Destroyer and liberates the people from Egypt (cf. Exod. 12:23). Rather, it is the Word who is in the blood who accomplished these things. And it was impossible for the Jews who belonged to Caiaphas to understand these things (cf. John 11:45–53). If they themselves had been willing to listen to Zechariah the prophet saying, "And you, by the blood of your covenant, have freed the prisoners from a waterless pit" (Zech. 9:11), then they would have listened to Isaiah proclaiming, "Like a sheep led to the slaughter," and "By his wound we have been healed" (Isa. 53:5–7).

Moreover, the Arians, who resemble the Jews, would themselves have been able to learn—if they had been willing—from the Savior who says, "I am the light," and again, "I am the truth" (John 9:5; 14:6), and from Paul: "the light of glory and the image of his strength" (cf. Heb. 1:3). For if they had paid attention to the things that were written in this way, the former people (the Jews) would not have opposed the Lord, nor would these others (the Arians) have become enemies of Christ. Therefore, receive the retribution for their transgression: in the case of the former people, the vineyard was taken away from them and given to a nation that would bear fruit (cf. Matt. 21:41, 43); and as for the latter people, the name of the Lord was taken from them and they are called "Arians."

But what does it profit me to talk about these people and to keep silent about those who have envied their heresy, the inheritors of the Melititan evil,[110] and those who commune with them and so have preferred their friendship over the tradition of our ancestors? For these latter people (those who are not Melitians, but commune with them) have not realized that they are defiling themselves with the dead and that they have been reckoned with those in hell (cf. Bar. 3:10–11). For God has abandoned them due to their abandonment of him, the source of wisdom.

Therefore, neither the Jews nor the Arians nor the Melitians nor the heretics share in the festival [...] the festival, just as the Apostle wrote,

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[110] It is likely that this phrase is an error and should read, "the inheritors of their (the Arians') evil, the Melitians."

"Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). He did not say, "Our portion is divided up for small groups of people, for it is not fitting that we proclaim it." Rather, it belongs to everyone to say like the Apostle, "Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ" (Rom. 8:39). God testifies to these things to everyone: "You are with me always" (Luke 15:31). Moreover, he promises them altogether, saying, "You[111] are the ones who have endured with me in my trials. I myself establish for you, as my Father established for me, a kingdom, so that you will eat and drink with me at my table in my kingdom" (Luke 22:28–30).

Therefore, since we have now been invited through the gospel to this great and heavenly banquet, into that swept upper room (cf. Luke 22:12), "let us cleanse ourselves," as the Apostle commanded, "from every defilement of the flesh and the spirit, completing purification in fear of God" (1 Cor. 7:1), so that by being found spotless inside and outside—outside, bearing self-control and righteousness; and inside, "rightly explaining the word of truth" in the Spirit (2 Tim. 2:15)—we might hear, "Enter into the joy of your Master" (Matt. 25:21).[112] For those who have fallen away from this joy, whether the Jews of old or the recent people, will hear in shame, "Friend, how did you enter this place without wearing a wedding garment?" (Matt. 22:12) And they will remain alien to the festival.

Thus, it has truly been my desire, since I am writing to people who understand, that what I have written to you suffice to indicate to you the day of the festival, for the season calls us. Inasmuch as there are some among those who say, "Here we are!" and are called "clergy," as I said before, who have fallen away from the faith on account of ignorance or because of fear of people and "love of money, which is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10), and have gone on the voyage of Hymenaios and Alexander, whom Paul "handed over to Satan so that they might learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20)—inasmuch as some of these are coming into the holy festival, it is fitting for them to be found to be sound in the faith and not at all shaky, but rather having a good conscience with respect to the Holy Scriptures.

I exhort you, be patient if I remind you with a few words, for truly "I am jealous of you with a divine jealousy" (2 Cor. 11:2).

[...] after they abandon such worship. Instruction of this kind does not belong to Christians, but is pagan thinking and empty fantasies. When the beggars and parasites of their (the Arians') heresy, the Melitians, caught up to them, they became wretched, not only because they have exchanged the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the name of Arius and have become Arians instead of Christians, as I have said, but also because, like the pagans, they worship the creature more than he who created everything, God (cf. Rom. 1:25), by saying, "The only Son of God is created." For their works resemble their thoughts, just like the fool about whom the Psalmist spoke:

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[111] Here begins citation of Cosmas in Greek, *Top. chris.* 10.7.

[112] Here the Cosmas citation ends.

"The fool said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Ps. 52[53]:1). They have destroyed and committed blasphemy by their lawless acts. For by worrying about vain things (cf. Ps. 2:1), like Pilate and Herod before, they have dared to fight against the Lord and to humiliate the saints who died for his name, because they are angry that those people confessed the one whom they deny.

For they have not left hidden in the earth the bodies of the martyrs who contested well, but they try to put them on stretchers and pieces of wood so that those who want to can view them. They do this with pomp, as if on account of the honor of the martyrs, but truly this is a contemptible thing, and they do it for a shameful reason. For indeed they have no martyr bodies in their city, nor do they know which is a martyr, although they have taken counsel to blaspheme their bodies and take them from the cemeteries of the catholic church. For those who have already been buried they exhume and carry out, so that, since they are put to shame for denying him whom the holy martyrs confessed, they might, even through their (the martyrs') bodies, find a way to deceive those whom they lead astray. But "the remnant of Israel is not deceived" (cf. Zeph. 3:13), nor did our ancestors pass this on to us; rather, they considered such an act to be lawless.

In the primeval time God excommunicated Adam by a sentence: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19). This word has come forth upon every person because it came forth upon every person in Adam (cf. Rom. 5:12–21), and everyone who dies everywhere is buried. Thus Abraham did when he bought the cave from Ephron and buried Sarah his wife there (Gen. 23:1–20). Afterwards, Isaac buried Abraham (Gen. 25:9), and the body of Jacob was buried in the same cave (Gen. 50:13). And Joseph, when he was going to die, commanded concerning his bones, and he was buried there (Gen. 50:24–25; Heb. 11:22). Moreover, it is written about each of those who have left their body that they were buried in tombs. In two places the Scripture says that the prophets were buried, saying, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the tombs of the righteous" (Matt. 23:29). And how [...] and Peter (Acts 2:29–30?) [...].

[...] not marvel when the outer place will testify that the body of the Lord was placed in a tomb and, moreover, that the tombs opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep arose and, after they arose, entered the city and appeared to many (Matt. 27:52–53)? It is possible to find these things in the Scriptures [...] and those who fell asleep were hidden under the earth [...].

Who has commanded such things to them? Moreover, in which ancient Scripture have they found them? [...]

For they have made the Lord jealous, and they have become defiled before the martyrs and became opponents of the Scripture. For they have disobeyed the voice that says, "Do not touch my anointed ones, and do no harm to my prophets" (Ps. 104[105]:15). For it is a condemned evil to dig up and plunder the tombs of the martyrs and not to bury them like the saints and, above everyone else, like the Lord. Instead, they treat them like the false prophets, for such people, along those who have followed them, "will be cast out on the roads before the sword and famine, and there will be no one to bury them," as Jeremiah the prophet said (Jer. 14:16). And concerning those who have sinned in the nation, he said, "There will be no one to mourn them nor to bury them. They will be an example on the face of the entire earth" (Jer. 8:2). And concerning Joachim the king of Judah, who committed many sins, he said, "They will not mourn him by saying, 'Oh, my brother!' Nor will they weep for him, saying, 'Woe to me, Lord! Woe to me, my brother!' You will prepare him for burial with a donkey's burial, and he will be thrown out and cast outside the gate of Jerusalem" (Jer. 22:18–19).

Who can hate the heretics as much as they deserve? Who would want even to meet up with them when they are humiliating the bodies of the saints like the false prophets? For such people—they and those who have followed them—will be discarded in this way. Who has seen the bodies of the prophets and of the martyrs lying about and exposed and has not trembled? This is not a Christian act. Paul did not command us to do this. The patriarchs did not do this, nor did the prophets in their time. Rather, it is the Melitians who have counseled these things for the sake of financial gain. This resembles the crookedness of Jeroboam, who sold <the priesthood, and those who sold> and bought doves in the temple of God, as it is written (1 Kings 12:31; Matt. 21:12–13; par.).[113] Rather it is clear without a doubt that it is those who are lawless now and are being driven out by whippings to whom the Lord said, "Do not make my Father's house a house of trade" (John 2:16). They too will hear him say, "Do not sell the body of my martyrs and do not make their good confession a business for the sake of greed." For it is necessary for those who commit such a sin to receive the same punishment.

These words should suffice to make clear this evil choice and to silence the heretics who have counseled this act. But as for us, the children of the church, so that we might be persuaded not to resemble them in this [...].

FESTAL LETTER 42 (370)[114]

[...] "Who will ascend the mountain of the Lord? And who will stand in the place of his purity?" (Ps. 23[24]:3) For the advantage of good works, just as he placed the text following these, saying, "the one who is holy in his hands" (Ps. 23[24]:4), is so that through these, I mean the hands, we might touch him who exists from the beginning, him to whom we have listened (cf. 1 John 1:1), and we might contemplate with a pure heart the treasures of the wisdom hidden in him (cf. Col. 2:3), and we might celebrate the festival as is fitting. For we have been called, my brothers and sisters, and now we are being gathered together by Wisdom, according to the parable of the gospel (Matt. 22:1–14), to that great and heavenly feast which is sufficient for every creature, I mean, to the Passover, which is the sacrificed Christ. "For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7).

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[113] I have accepted Lefort's conjectural restoration as well as his suggestion that Athanasius understood 1 Kings 12:31 to refer to simony on Jeroboam's part (cf. *Apol. Const.* 28; CSCO 150: 26, n. 80).

[114] The fragments of the Coptic text are edited by Lefort, *Lettres festales*, 27–29, 64–67.

[...] drink from a spring of water bubbling up to eternal life (John 4:14). They will be fit for such an invitation and for this feast who work at the lifestyle depicted by the Psalmist, saying, "He who has not placed his soul on vanity nor sworn to his neighbor deceitfully" (Ps. 23[24]:4). Thus Wisdom desires us to be; she herself is exhorting us, "Abandon folly so that you might live, and seek wisdom, so that you might spend your lifetime and set understanding upright in knowledge" (Prov. 9:6). Those who are clothed in this sort of garment will hear: "Enter into the joy of your Master" (Matt. 25:21). [...]

He silenced the demons when they were speaking such words, and he commanded them to be silent (Luke 4:41; etc.), not because they were lying—for what they said, that he is Son of the holy God, is true—but so that they would not deceive people through these words and then later teach them about their own doctrines. He did this while he was among us, during the time of his sojourn. Moreover, he commanded Moses from the beginning to proclaim what I have said. And he instructed Paul to silence the slave girl in Philippi who had a fortune-telling spirit in her, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, and to cast out the unclean spirit that was in her, so that she would not proclaim some impiety and the people believe in her by means of some act of hypocrisy (Acts 16:1–18).

When they say that many people who had unclean spirits have been healed in the martyr shrines, these are their excuses. Let them listen, and I will answer them by saying that they are not healed by the martyrs coming upon the demons, but they are healed by the Savior, the one whom the martyrs confessed. And the demons cry out because they are being tortured by him, just as those in the gospel cried out saying, "I beg you, do not torture us!" (Luke 8:28) But they seek to see the demons that are destroying them. These people give glory to them and ask them about what will happen. After these words, will they dare to question the unclean spirits? Yes, they will dare, for they are shameless lovers of pleasure.

So, in order that now their conscience, which is evil against the martyrs, might be convicted and it might be made clear that they are not going to the tombs of the martyrs with a true disposition, I exhort you to pay attention to what I say. The Lord says through Isaiah the prophet: "Be my witness" (Isa. 43:10). Furthermore, he said while he was among us: "Everyone who confesses me before human beings, I will confess before my Father in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). Whoever testifies in behalf of the Lord, the Lord will testify in his behalf, and whoever is in the Lord, he himself will be found dwelling in him, just as he was in Paul who says, "If you seek the proof of Christ speaking in us" (2 Cor. 13:3). Moreover, it is written that the Word of God, that is, the Son, came to the prophets, and he speaks through them and prophesies.[115]

Therefore, if they themselves believed because of the confession of the martyrs, through which they confessed God, they would understand what kind of condemnation they bring upon themselves by thinking that the demons are the prophets of the martyrs. But the martyrs did not confess that they would speak through the demons and that the Lord, whom the martyrs confessed and who did not abandon those who confessed him, spoke through the demons. This is the humiliation of the saints and a sign of ignorance about what a martyr is. For if they understood, they would believe that the martyrs are in Christ, not in the demons, and they would call upon Christ who is in them and wait until he reveals to them what they are seeking, either in a dream or by speaking in their heart, and they would not run to the demons.

And so how can such people be called Christians? How could it not be necessary for us to withdraw from them? For they have been revealed to be strangers to God and enemies of the Scriptures and people without a good conscience toward the holy martyrs. Why do they even go to their tombs? They are doing this annoying thing, not because they want them to act as ambassadors in their behalf before God, but so that they might question the demons. This is not a Christian act, but such transgressions are foolish acts of the demons and appropriate to idolatry.

Therefore, I exhort you, let such people remain outside the synagogue of God since they are lepers and strangers to the faith. And let not such deeds be done among us at all (cf. Eph. 5:3), nor among those with us. For we are strangers to the demons since we have the prophets. And because we worship the Word of God who speaks from heaven, we do not need those who speak from earth. Living like this and being cleansed of such leaven (cf. 1 Cor. 5:8), we will celebrate the feast as is proper and in accordance with the glory of God.

We will begin the holy Lent on the 21st of Mesir (Feb. 15), during which we will persevere in praying and fasting. The great week of the holy Passover (we will begin) on the 26th of Paremhotep (March 22), and we will stop fasting on first of Parmouti (March 27), on the eve of the Sabbath. We will celebrate the feast on Sunday, the 2d of the same month of Parmouti (March 28). And we will undertake the seven weeks of the holy Pentecost, remembering the poor and praying for one another, so that we might rejoice and keep the feast with the saints in heaven in Christ Jesus our

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[115] Athanasius evidently understands such frequent phrases in the Hebrew Bible as "the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad" (2 Sam. 24:11) as references to the pre-incarnate Christ (CSCO 150: 29, n. 19).

Lord, through whom be glory to the Father with him, forever and ever. Amen.

Greet one another with a holy kiss. The brothers and sisters with me greet you.

The 43rd (*sic*) Letter of the blessed Athanasius.[116]

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[116] The numbering is a mistake of the Coptic scribe; see Coquin, "Les letteres festales," 135.

MIRACLES, MONKS, AND MONUMENTS: THE *HISTORIA MONACHORUM IN AEGYPTO* AS PILGRIMS' TALES*

Georgia Frank

"I hear you are penetrating the secret recesses of Egypt, visiting the companies of monks and paying a round of visits to the heavenly family upon earth," the biblical scholar Jerome once wrote to a friend.[1] These words are a vivid reminder of the appeal Egyptian monasticism held for late antique Christians. At a time when Palestine was attracting growing numbers of pilgrims, many travelers also made their way to Egypt to witness the wonders of monastic life.[2] Melania the Younger followed the example of other pilgrims when she combined visits to holy people as well as to biblical sites.[3] Even Jerome eventually saw for himself the "heavenly family" he had long admired in saints' lives.[4]

If by "pilgrimage" one means a journey toward a valued ideal,[5] then visiting this extended "heavenly family" fits the definition. Saints' lives invited pilgrims to view these monastics as wonderworkers, sages, and perfect imitators of Jesus. These types of texts played a role in shaping pilgrims' perceptions of their goal. We know, for instance, that reading saints' lives was one way Melania the Younger prepared for her journey. As her biographer describes this keen interest, she "would go through the *Lives* of the fathers as if she were eating dessert."[6] Although a saint's life can help us understand why pilgrims would seek out a single holy person, we must look elsewhere to understand why pilgrims sought out many ascetics in a particular region. What can pilgrims tell us about what attracted them, not to one specific site, but to an entire region? *The History of the Monks in Egypt* is one pilgrim's memoir that can illumine how pilgrim's perceptions of Egypt shaped their expectations of the monks who lived there.

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* André-Jean Festugière, ed. *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, SH 34 (1961) repr. with French trans. in SH 53 (1971). Unless stated otherwise, I quote from the English translation by Norman Russell in *Lives of the Desert Fathers*, CS 34 (Kalamazoo, MI 1980). I thank David Frankfurter and Derek Krueger for reading earlier drafts of this essay and providing useful comments.

[1] Jerome, *Ep.* 3.1 (to Rufinus) ed. and trans. Jérôme Labourt, *Saint Jérôme, Lettres* (8 vols.; Paris 1949–63), 1:11.

[2] Bernhard Kötting, "Wallfahrten zu lebenden Personen im Altertum," *Wallfahrt kennt keine Grenzen*, ed. by L. Kriss-Rettenbeck and G. Mohler (Munich/Zurich 1984), 226–34, esp. 227–28. See also Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Crestwood, NY 1966), 46–53 and Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church: In the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford 1978), 79–83.

[3] Gerontius, *Life of Melania*, 37–40; ed. Denis Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, SC 90 (Paris 1962). On Melania's interest in Egyptian ascetics, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Life of Melania the Younger* (New York 1984), 169.

[4] Jerome, *Ep.* 108.14. On Jerome's deep-seated ambivalence to the desert, see the interesting discussion in Patricia Cox Miller, "Jerome's Centaur: A Hyper-Icon of the Desert," *JECS* 4 (1996):209–33, esp. 210–16.

[5] Modified form of Alan Morinis's definition: "the pilgrimage is a journey undertaken by a person in quest of a place or a state that he or she believes to embody a valued ideal" ("Introduction," in *idem*, ed., *Sacred Journey: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage* [Westport, CT 1992], 4).

Written by a Jerusalem monk who visited several monasteries and hermits in the closing years of the fourth century, the *History of the Monks* is a choppy collage of biographical vignettes, novellas, anecdotes, and travel impressions. This panorama of Egyptian monastic culture was soon translated into Latin and found a large audience outside Egypt.[7] It was not the first work about Egyptian monasticism to reach the West. As the prologue to the *Life of Antony* intimates, foreign audiences were eager to read about Egyptian monastics.[8] Unlike works that focused on a single holy person, however, the author of the *History of the Monks* had the task of presenting an entire culture to his audience. How did the writer make this culture intelligible and believable to his audience? Insights drawn from recent studies of travel writing can illumine how this pilgrim (and, ultimately, his audience) grappled with this distant and strange culture. In its literary form, that grappling adopted various techniques to engage the reader in that other world. Thus, this essay focuses on the use of ancient travel writing techniques in the Greek version, which is arguably earlier and closer to the traveler's experiences.[9]

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[6] Gerontius, *The Life of Melania the Younger*, 23 (Clark, 45).

[7] Eva Schulz-Flügel, ed., *Tyrannius Rufinus, Historia monachorum sive De Vita Sanctorum Patrum* Patristische Texte und Studien 34 (Berlin 1990).

[8] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, prol. 5 (ed. G.J.M. Bartelink; SC 400 [1994], 128); cf. p. 47.

[9] A.-J. Festugière, "Le Problème littéraire de *l'Historia Monachorum*," *Hermes* 83 (1955):257–84. For a brief overview of the debate since this work, see Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority*, 16 n. 27; Frances Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon* (Philadelphia 1983), 38–39; C.P. Bammel, "Problems of the *Historia Monachorum*," *JTS* n.s. 47

Since we are dealing with a work *about* Egyptian monks, and not by them,[10] the aim here is not to establish the relative accuracy of the *History of the Monks*. Instead, the fact that the work was written by outside observers for outsiders to this movement must be kept in mind. This outsiders' perspective is the starting point for reading the *History of the Monks* as travel writing. At issue is how travel texts shaped non-monastic perceptions of Egyptian monasticism and thus, of pilgrimage itself.

I. *The* History of the Monks *as Travel Writing*

To those of us who are accustomed to the thick descriptions that enliven modern travel writing, the *History of the Monks* may appear rather thin. Its author took little interest in mapping this strange land or writing guidebooks for future pilgrims. As the vexing silences suggest, that job was left to the cartographers, gazeteers, liturgical specialists, or travel guides of his day. Nor do the landscape or even his travel companions merit much sustained attention.[11] Although he writes in the first-person, his work is neither introspective nor personal. There are no "interior castles" to speak of. The entire work is pointed outwards, to the surfaces of Egyptian monasticism, from the vast, desert landscape to the furrows of a monk's brow. Like most pilgrims' reports, the author includes place names, a few geographical coordinates, and names of monks he and his companions visited. There are also some enigmatic details. One wonders what the author could possibly mean when he described a monk with "the face of an angel." What is significant about meeting an abba who "looked like Abraham and had a beard like Aaron's"? In some places, he unexpectedly cuts off an eyewitness account to report some

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(1996): 92–104, esp. 98–101. In later manuscripts, *History of the Monks* was often conflated with similar compilations, such as Palladius's *Lausiac History*. On this textual history, see Cuthbert Butler, *The Lausiac History of Palladius* 1–2, TextsS 6 (Cambridge 1904), 1:15–38 and Schulz-Flügel, *Rufinus, Historia monachorum*, 3–67.

[10] James Goehring, "The Encroaching Desert: Literary Production and Ascetic Space in Early Christian Egypt," *JECS* 1 (1993):281–96, esp. 292–94.

[11] On the interpretive implications of "scenic" or "social" emptiness, see Mary B. Campbell, "'The Object of One's Gaze': Landscape, Writing, and Early Medieval Pilgrimage," *Discovering New Worlds: Essays on Medieval Exploration and Imagination*, ed. by Scott D. Westrem (New York 1991), 3–15, esp. 4–5; and Blake Leyerle, "Landscape as Cartography in Early Christian Pilgrimage Narratives," *JAAR* 64 (1996):119–43, esp. 125–26.

hearsay about miracles the ascetic once performed.[12] What can these odd figures of speech and narrative choices tell us about pilgrims' experiences?

To recent literary historians, these puzzling expressions are not empty tropes, but symptoms of the author's efforts to grapple with the otherness of Egyptian monastic culture. A better understanding of the nature and function of travel writing can lend insight into pilgrims' perceptions. Even if we cannot ask these pilgrims directly about their experiences, we do have access to the expression of those experiences, that is to say, the stylized and symbolic language through which they simultaneously recorded *and interpreted* their memories.[13] In *Witness and the Other World*, Mary Campbell shows how pilgrims' narratives are, in fact, literary creations and not transparent records, such as a census or tax report.[14] Focussing on narrative patterns, repetitions, and omissions in these reports, she is a perceptive reader of pilgrims' expectations and ideals, in short, their worldview. As the medievalist Donald Howard once put it, "Travel itself is 'imaginative': travels are fictions to the extent that the traveller sees what he wants or expects to see, which is often what he has read."[15]

Both these writers are saying something important about texts, language, and travelers: all travel writing is an act of translation. Travelers use what they already know to describe what they struggle to know. In that struggle to tell their story, pilgrims may draw on familiar stories and prior expectations (many of which are informed by texts). All travel descriptions, then, reveal how one anticipates and perceives another culture. Even the most plot-poor and stilted accounts can reveal pilgrims' perceptions of space, of time, and of the transcendant possibilities of pilgrimage. With a better understanding of how travel writers *chose* to tell their stories, we gain insight into the workings of the pilgrim's imagination.

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[12] *Hist.mon.* 6.1; 26; 8.24.

[13] Recent studies of medieval pilgrims' reports offer fresh perspectives on the poetics of travel writing: Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca 1988); Donald R. Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and Their Posterity* (Berkeley 1980). On rhetorical analysis, see Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation, and Reality* (Cambridge 1991), esp. 15–84. On the value of a literary approach for uncovering pilgrims' experiences, see Barbara Nimri Aziz, "Personal Dimensions of the Sacred Journey: What Pilgrims Say," *RelS* 23 (1987):247–61, esp. 247–48. For literary patterns in late antique pilgrims' descriptions of the holy land, see Leyerle, "Landscape as Cartography"; Laurie Douglass, "A New Look at the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*," *JECS* 4 (1996):313–34; Campbell, *Witness*, 15–45.

[14] Campbell, *Witness*, 4–6.

[15] Howard, "Writers and Pilgrims," 10.

In a work that combines biographical detail with travel descriptions, it is easy to forget that ancient audiences would have read the *History of the Monks* as a pilgrim's report. To many moderns, pilgrimage is synonymous with holy places; and so texts about other types of destinations rarely enter the discussion of pilgrimage. Even if one accepts a broader definition of "pilgrimage," the *History of the Monks* shows a strong biographical interest that occasionally eclipses the journey itself. In surveys of patristic literature, for instance, the *History of the Monks* is usually mentioned in discussions of monastic literature.[16] To these modern interpreters, travel appears incidental to the biographical interests of the works.

The impulse to read these works as monastic biography has been warranted by other biographical works that employed a similar format. Lives of philosophers collected by Philostratus or Eunapius in the fourth century are two parallels that are normally invoked.[17] The compilation was also used in the so-called "alphabetical" collections of apophthegmata, namely those that arranged sayings and anecdotes according to each personality.[18] Topography and biography came even closer in a Christianized work known as the *Lives of the Prophets*. By locating the works in an early Byzantine monastic setting, rather than a Jewish context, David Satran has proposed that the *Lives of the Prophets* share more in common with the *History of the Monks* than previously assumed. If Satran's thesis is correct, both works represent monastic efforts to cultivate a sacred topography in a particular area through lives of holy persons.[19] All these parallels point to a growing interest in linking remarkable personalities to specific regions.

The *History of the Monks* stands apart, however, for its attention to travel in the regions described. Unlike the philosophical anthologies or apophthegmata, the *History of the Monks* follows a travelled route.[20] As an itinerant observer, the author was no chronicler interested in tracing master-disciple relationships.[21] Instead, he kept the focus on his own experiences, using the first-person narrative, as if to prevent the work from slipping into institutional history. Although he may disappear from view as he recounts tales and journeys of others, the pilgrim's "rhetorical presence" as a traveler is central to the shape of the narrative.[22]

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[16] Young, *Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 38–44.

[17] Pierre Canivet, *Le monachisme syrien selon Théodoret de Cyr*, TH 42 (Paris 1977), 65–66, 68–69, 79–82.

[18] *Apophthegmata patrum*, *PG* 65, cols. 72–440. Eng. trans. *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*, trans. by Benedicta Ward, CS 59 (Kalamazoo, MI 1975).

[19] *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine* (Leiden 1995), 60–63, 101–110, esp. 107.

[20] Eunapius, for instance, connects his lives together with teacher-disciple relations, e.g., *Vitae Sophistarum*, trans. by Wilmer C. Wright, LCL (Cambridge 1921), 377.

As long as the genre was arranged geographically, the pilgrim's presence remained alive. That voice, however, eventually dropped out of the genre, as later anthologies adopted a biographical organization. Already with the appearance of Theodoret of Cyrrhus's *Historia religiosa* in the 440s, the anthology format shifted to a chronological framework. Theodoret opened the work with notices about deceased ascetics, then proceeded to discuss his contemporaries, a plan that undercut the possibility of any continuous travel report.[23] By the sixth century, the *historia* severed all ties to travel writing. The *Spiritual Meadow*, by John Moschus (ca. 550–619) and John of Ephesus's (507–589) *Lives of the Eastern Saints* reflect the hagiographical trajectory of the genre, which would result in liturgical collections of vitae used in the middle Byzantine period.[24] Travel, once the organizing principle of earlier collections, was reduced to a minor motif in the hagiographical direction the genre assumed.[25]

In addition to this historical development, there are internal features of the work that prompt some scholars to distance it from travel writing. As critics point to misplaced episodes or detect the use of written sources, suspicions arise that parts of the journey, if not all of it, might be fabricated from written and oral reports. Only the degree of this borrowing remains subject to debate.[26] Recent investigations have laid some of these doubts to rest, offering sound reasons for believing that an actual journey provided the impetus for writing the *History of the Monks*.[27] The fact remains, however, that in its final form, the travelog bears the traces of other voices.[28]

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[21] Canivet, *Monachisme syrien*, 79–82. *Idem* and Alice Leroy-Molinghen, ed. and trans., *Théodoret de Cyr, Histoire des moines de Syrie*, SC 234, 257 (Paris 1977–1979), 1:13.

[22] On this term see Campbell, *Witness*, 15.

[23] Theodoret mentions three organizing principles at key transitions: by chronology (dead saints then "those still living" [21.1]); by setting (desert saints then ascetics in "inhabited lands" [4.1; Canivet, *Monachisme syrien*, 83–86, 147–52]); and by gender (male saints then female saints [29.1]). Although the Syrian bishop mentions some of his own travels (e.g., *Hist.rel.* 9.4), they do not alter this overall plan.

[24] John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale*. *PG* 87:2851–3112. Eng. trans. John Wortley. *The Spiritual Meadow of John Moschos*, CS 139 (Kalamazoo, MI 1992). John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. and trans. by E.W. Brooks, *PO* 17–19 (Paris 1923–25); see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and the* Lives of the Eastern Saints (Berkeley 1990), 34–35. "Synaxarion," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. by Alexander P. Kazhdan *et al.* (New York 1991), 3:1991; cf. "Menologion," 2.1341.

[25] Even the title "historia" signalled a travel genre. In addition to signifying "investigation," the term could also mean "visits" in fourth-century writings. See G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford Press 1961), 678b s.v. "ἱστορία; Eusebius also uses ἱστορία in the context of (pilgrim) travel, *Hist. eccl.*, 6.11.1 (E. Schwartz, ed., p. 540.27); I thank E. Mühlenberg for this reference.

If one accepts that the *History of the Monks* contains descriptions of an actual journey, there is little to be gained from the critics who point to geographical or other errors. This anthology is a travel book and not a travel guide. The ancients, like us, consulted travel guides for directions and "must-see" attractions; travel books, on the other hand provided inspiration and entertainment for armchair travelers. Jerome understood this distinction, when he urged his readers not to mistake his description of Paula's travels for a guide for travelers, or, *odoeporicon*.[29] He could be confident that his audience knew the distinction between a narrative *about* a journey and a narrative *for* a journey. One doubts, then, that readers of the *History of the Monks* would have been perturbed to discover that Oxyrhynchus is improperly placed in the geographical sequence of chapters.[30] Ancient and medieval audiences frequently read about imagined journeys, with little desire to follow in the traveler's footsteps.[31] It seems safe to say that ancient readers would have had no problem identifying this tale about travel to distant places as a travel book.

A feature of the *History of the Monks* that seems alien both to modern guidebooks and travel books is miracles. The abundance of miracles, in fact, led Derwas Chitty to issue this warning: "The work is full of wonders, and the writer was extremely gullible."[32] Even among generous interpreters who appeal to a historical or cultural context that was more inclined to tales of wonder, the miracles are a distraction, even an embarrassment.[33] Benedicta Ward moved this debate over miracles in an important direction when she explored the theological significance of marvels as a form of biblical typology. As Ward points out, miracles had a symbolic purpose within ancient hagiography, eliciting the virtues and the sanctity of biblical prototypes.[33bis]

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[26] Butler, *Lausiac History*, 198–203; cf. Schulz-Flügel, *Rufinus, Historia monachorum*, 7–10.

[27] See Young, *Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 40–41 on this debate.

[28] Campbell, *Witness*, 2, 4.

[29] *Ep.* 108.8.1 (Labourt, 5.165). On the development of travel guides, see Jean-Marie André and Marie-Françoise Baslez, *Voyager dans l'Antiquité* (Paris 1993), 64–65.

[30] See Butler, *Lausiac History*, 1.201–2.

[31] For a rich study of "intertextuality" in medieval travel writing, see now Iain Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The "Travels" of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia 1997).

[32] *The Desert a City*, 51.

What Ward's analysis did not consider, however, was that miracles had a long tradition in travel writing. Ever since Odysseus landed on the island of the Phaiacians, storytellers delighted arm-chair travelers with tales of distant and strange places. In the fifth century BCE writers such as Herodotus and a court physician named Ctesias of Cnidos pushed the boundaries of the geographical imagination with their accounts of exotic peoples, strange beasts, and the natural wonders of distant lands.[34] This utopian fascination with the foreign and fantastic resurged in Hellenistic times with the appearance of works devoted exclusively to reporting amazing events and facts.[35] In an early collection, Kallimachos of Cyrene (c. 305–240 BCE) compiled brief anecdotes about strange geological formations and unusual flora and fauna. Before long, several writers produced their own compilations, expanding their lists to include amazing human beings. These lists of marvels, or, "paradoxographies," as modern classical scholars call them, remained popular throughout the Roman period.

Although the marvels described in the *History of the Monks* and those found in ancient paradoxographies bear little resemblance, their style of presentation is quite similar. Notices were usually brief and self-contained, a feature that permitted them to be arranged in various ways, if at all. Kallimachos, for instance, arranged his notices by locality, a scheme reminiscent of the genre's origins in travel writing. In later periods, however, compilers used topical arrangements.

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[33] E.g., Frances Young calls on modern readers to "mak[e] some allowance for a tendency to exaggeration and idealization" in reading the *History of the Monks* and similar compilations (*Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 41).

[33bis] Benedicta Ward, "Introduction," in Russell, trans., *Lives of the Desert Fathers*, 39–46, esp. 39–40.

[34] James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton 1992), 82–120.

[35] See Tomas Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity* (Berkeley 1983), 117–21. I am indebted to Dr. Lawrence Wills for bringing the relevance of the *Reisefabulistik* to my attention. On paradoxography see the useful bibliography in William Hansen, trans., *Phlegon of Tralles' Book of Marvels* (Exeter 1996), 2–12. In addition to the works Hansen cites, see also Campbell, *Witness*, 47–86; Roger French, *Ancient Natural History: Histories of Nature* (New York 1994), 299–303; David Winston, "Iambulus' *Islands of the Sun* and Hellenistic Literary Utopias," *Science Fiction Studies* 3 (1976):219–27, esp. 221–23.

Phlegon of Tralles, who compiled a *Book of Marvels* during the reign of Hadrian (117–38 CE), began with ghost stories, then proceeded with brief accounts of sex-changers and hermaphrodites, finds of giant bones, monstrous and multiple births, and so on. Phlegon's stories come closer to the *History of the Monks*, insofar as he took special interest in describing amazing people by means of loosely connected notices of uneven lengths.

Without overstating the resemblances, it is also worth noting that both authors rarely feel the need to comment or explain in great depth. "In Dalmatia," as Phlegon tells it, "in the so-called Cave of Artemis one can see many bodies whose rib-bones exceed eleven cubits." End of notice. Whether those bones once belonged to an animal or a human is not a matter of speculation. Or, in Sicily, when earthquakes uncovered a tooth over a foot long, Phlegon does not pause to ask what type of creature might have teeth of such alarming proportions. Only Egypt seems to invite some explanation and commentary. "In Nitriai in Egypt," Phlegon writes:

> bodies are exhibited that are no smaller than these [the tooth from Sicily] and are not concealed in the earth but are unencumbered and plain to see. The bones do not lie mixed together in disorder but are arranged in such a manner that together a person viewing them recognized some as thigh bones others as shin bones and so on with the other limbs. One should not disbelieve in these bones either, considering that in the beginning when nature was in her prime she reared everything near to gods, but just as time is running down, so also the sizes of creatures have been shrinking.[36]

What strikes the reader here is Phlegon's attempt to locate these amazing finds both in space and time. Whereas Dalmatia seems incidental to the discovery of ancient bones, place is important to Phlegon's discussion of Egyptian finds. He takes interest in origins here, "when nature was in her prime" and in the fact that such origins are "plain to see," a visibility that he mentions only in connection with Egypt. For marvel writers, then, any place can be a land of wonders, but as Phlegon intimates in these notices, wonders in Egypt are amazing for their ties to a sacred past that is plain to see. (In the final section of this essay, I shall return to this notion of a visible past.)

Travelers' descriptions of Egypt often noted this alliance between distant places and marvels. Herodotus, for one, justified devoting an entire book of the *Histories* to Egypt, for the sole reason that "nowhere are there so many marvellous things (θωμάσια)."[37] As François Hartog points out, marvels are fundamental to Herodotus's purposes as a travel writer. If he is to convince his readers to believe in the "otherness" of a place called Egypt, he must rely on marvels to preserve both its spatial and cultural remoteness. As Hartog explains the literary effect of marvels, "*Thoma* translates the difference between there and here and, as such ... produces an impression of reality. It declares: I am the reality of otherness."[38] Hartog's analysis of miracles highlights their critical function in travel discourse: in addition to constructing the image of Egypt for Herodotus's readers, miracles guaranteed the trustworthiness of that construction. Miracles implied an eyewitness who could testify to the wonders of a place that was very far removed from the reader's world.

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[36] Phlegon, *Book of Marvels*, 15 (Hansen, 44).

The ancients imagined the outer limits of the known world as a place of spectacular marvels.[39] Herodotus anticipated these wonders when he observed that "it is but reasonable that the most distant parts of the world, as they enclose and wholly surround all other lands, should have those things which we deem best and rarest."[40] "Best and rarest," in this case, however, is one-eyed men who steal gold from griffins!

Imagined journeys also associated distant places with marvels that strained credibility. The title of Antonius Diogenes' fantastic journey, the *Marvels beyond Thule*, says it all: ἄπιστα, or "unbelievable things" take place beyond the edges of existence.[41] Even if, as Strabo remarked, "the distant is difficult to disprove,"[42] writers felt little need to justify describing marvels. As Lucian's parody of the genre, *A True Story (Verae Historiae)*, suggests, readers expected to find astounding marvels in remote places. As if conceding to this expectation, Lucian promised to "tell all kinds of lies in a plausible and specious way," as generations of travel writers had done before him.[43] Although said with tongue in cheek, he is pointing to a fact of travel writing: a distant place without marvels is not so distant after all.[44]

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[37] Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.35, trans. A.D. Godley, 4 vols, LCL (Cambridge 1981), 1.315.

[38] *Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. by Janet Lloyd (Berkeley 1988), 237.

[39] Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 39.

[40] Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.116 (Godley, 143), cf. 3.106. This *topos* is often associated with India, see Jacques LeGoff, "The Medieval West and the Indian Ocean: An Oneiric Horizon," *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago 1980), 189–200, esp. 193; Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 82–120.

[41] *Marvels beyond Thule*, summary in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 166 (ed. R. Henry [Paris 1960]; Gerald N. Sandy, trans. in B.P. Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* [Berkeley 1989], 779). See also James S. Romm, "Novels beyond Thule: Antonius Diogenes, Rabelais, Cervantes," in *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, ed. by James Tatum (Baltimore 1994), 101–16, esp. 103. Cf. Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 202–14.

[42] 11.6.4 cited along with similar examples in Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 98 and n. 37.

Christian audiences also expected to find miracles in travellers' tales. Legends of the apostles and apocalyptic writings edified and entertained ancient audiences with marvels about distant places in this world and the next.[45] Thus, miracles were not only the stuff of an amazing life, but as these examples from travel writing show, the stuff of exotic places.

At home in travel writing and in sacred biography, miracles were an important element of a hybrid work such as the *History of the Monks*. This combination of genres played a key role in shaping prospective pilgrims' image of desert asceticism. For if hagiography allows the reader to imagine an individual holy life, travel writing has the added effect of connecting that holy existence to place. In expanding a travel narrative with biographical digressions, then, the *History of the Monks* allowed ancient audiences to imagine individual ascetics *within* a separate world. When another world—and not just individual inhabitants—captures the reader's imagination, we are dealing with travel writing. To say that readers would have recognized the *History of the Monks* as travel writing raises the question of the aims and function of the genre.

II. *Displacement in the* History of the Monks

The challenge for any travel writer is to draw the reader into another, unfamiliar world, one that is distant and self-contained. In order to convince the reader of that construction, the writer uses various techniques to differentiate between the reader's world and the world described in the text.[46] Even when those worlds might overlap, the writer must preserve a "clear cultural distance."[47] There are several techniques with which the author can position the readers outside the world described in the text. Even if the author draws the reader closer to the world described in the text, the reader is never assimilated into that world. Every "there" implies a "here"; every "them" suggests an "us," with the result that the reader is always displaced from the world described. That displacement is essential if the writer is to succeed at rendering an exotic world sufficiently familiar to be understood, but without undermining its "otherness."[48] In the *History of the Monks*, the pilgrim comments often that he is an outsider writing for other outsiders. Sometimes those cues are subtle, as in this description of John of Lycopolis's miracles:

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[43] Lucian, *Verae Historiae* 1.3, trans. A.M. Harmon, LCL (Cambridge 1913; repr. 1990), 1.2–3; among his forbears, he mentions Ctesias, Iambulus, and Homer. On this *topos*, see Emilio Gabba, "True History and False History in Classical Antiquity," *JRS* 71 (1981):50–62, esp. 53.

[44] Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 231–32.

[45] See e.g., Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia 1987), 69–72; Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia 1985). On this feature in Hellenistic novels, see André and Baslez, *Voyager dans l'Antiquité*, 62–64.

> These are the wonders which [John] performed before strangers who came to see him [τοὺς ἔξωθεν ἐρχομένους]. As regards his own fellow-citizens [πολίταις συνεχῶς], who frequently came to him for their needs, he foreknew and revealed things hidden in the future.[49]

Even though both groups benefit from the holy man's powers, the distinction between outsiders (ἔξωθεν) and those nearby (συνεχῶς) remains firm. This separation between fellow-citizen and visitors keeps the reader at farther remove from the pilgrim's destination, the holy man.

What buttresses that separation, in literary terms, is the continuous rhetorical presence of the first-person traveler/narrator. Whereas use of the third-person might efface the pilgrim, the *History of the Monks* relies on that authorial presence, particularly in the opening words of many notices. As one chapter opens,

> *We also saw* another father in the desert not far from the city, called Theon, a holy man who had lived as an anchorite in a small cell and had practised silence for thirty years ... *One could see him* with the face of an angel giving joy to his visitors by his gaze and abounding with much grace.[50]

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[46] Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 212–59.

[47] François Hartog, *Mémoire d'Ulysse: Récits sur la frontière en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1996), 60.

[48] On this subtle negotiation between familiar and remarkable, see John Elsner, "From the Pyramids to Pausanias and Piglet: Monuments, Travel, and Writing," in *Art and Text in Ancient Greek Culture*, ed. by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge 1994), 225–54, esp. 227.

[49] *Hist.mon.* 1.11.

[50] *Hist.mon.* 6.1 (emphasis added).

The traveler's direct, visual experience of the holy man—his physical appearance, some loose geographical coordinates, and Theon's hospitality—anchors the pilgrim's presence at the outset of the notice. The author not only sees for the audience, but even controls what is seen. As he says elsewhere, "But what need is there to speak of any of the works of this saint other than those which we perceived with our own eyes?"[51] This rhetorical presence preserves the distance between the reader's world and the exotic world visited.

By drawing attention to his own role as eyewitness, the author of the *History of the Monks* may appear closer to the world of the monks, but the distances always remind the audience that he belongs to the reader's world. Geographical details, such as place-names, borders, and other markers give the impression of a guidebook, when, in effect, they preserve the "otherness" of Egyptian monasticism. They are part of a larger strategy to measure and quantify the remoteness of the "other," as if to suggest that what cannot be completely understood can, at least, be measured.[52]

At several points in the notices, the author emphasizes the distances and difficulties involved in reaching holy people. As if shuddering at the memory, the author hesitates to describe the desert of Antinoë where Abba Elias lived. "No description can do justice to that rugged desert in the mountain," he warns the reader. Despite this reticence, the author describes the arduous path one must endure to reach that perfect monk.[53] A more perilous approach is described in the chapter on Scetis:

> This place is a waste land lying at a distance of a day's and a night's journey from Nitria through the desert. It is a very perilous journey for travellers. For if one makes even a small error, one can get lost in the desert and find one's life in danger.[54]

In alerting the reader to danger, this author also mentions the distances. And the epilogue enumerates the efforts and risks that were required to make the journey. As the author prefaces a list of torments in the epilogue,

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[51] *Hist.mon.* 1.13. Later, the narrator describes Copres (10.1), who performed many miracles "some of them, indeed, before our very eyes."

[52] Cf. Hartog, who refers to these techniques as "operators of intelligibility" (*Mirror of Herodotus*, 234–35).

[53] *Hist.mon.* 7.2.

[54] *Hist.mon.* 23.1.

> In fact, it was not without danger or hardship that we visited those fathers whom we have mentioned. Nor was it without considerable effort that we saw what is reported in this work. On the contrary, we suffered much on our journey and came very near to losing our lives before we were counted worthy to see these things.[55]

Whether or not this list has "all the freshness and circumstantiality and simplicity of a narration of facts," as Cuthbert Butler claimed, is beside the point.[56] The message of these hardships is more important than their plausibility. They may appear a sobering antidote to the marvels described in previous pages, but the dangers, in effect, heighten the marvelous nature of the destinations. Such dangers are the necessary conditions for being "counted worthy to see these things," a reward that is also implied in the chapter on Scetis: "All the monks [in Scetis] have attained perfection."[57]

Frequent mention of hardships and great distances has a larger purpose: to prepare the reader for the marvels interlaced throughout the notices of the *History of the Monks*. Displacement and miracles are bound even in the opening lines of the prologue: "For [God] brought us to Egypt and showed us great and wonderful things [μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστά]."[58] In this introduction, one hears the opening words of Herodotus' *Histories*, who introduces the subject of his work as μεγάλα τε καὶ θαυμαστα.[59] This cue also evokes Egypt's long-standing reputation as a distant land and home of wonders. As many travel writers described Egypt, it was a land famed for its natural beauty, fertility, strange fauna, antiquity, and wisdom.[60] The *History of the Monks* casts the monks in a similar exotic glow:

> They do not busy themselves with any earthly matter or take account of anything that belongs to this transient world. But while dwelling on

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[55] *Hist.mon.* epil. 3.

[56] Butler, *Lausiac History*, 1:203.

[57] *Hist.mon.* 23.1.

[58] *Hist.mon.* prol. 1 (Russell, 49).

[59] Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.1 (Godley, 2).

[60] K.A.D. Smelik and E.A. Hemelrijk, "'Who Knows Not What Monsters Demented Egypt Worships?': Opinions on Egyptian Animal Worship in Antiquity as Part of the Conception of Egypt," *ANRW* II.17.4 (1984):1853–2337, esp. 1873–75, 1897, 1938–55; I thank Dr. Stephanie West for this reference. For Christian examples, see *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* in John K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford 1993), 68–83. See also Paul J. Achtemeier, "Jesus and the Disciples as Miracle Workers in the Apocryphal New Testament," *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Notre Dame 1976), 149–86, esp. 155–56.

> earth in this manner, they live as true citizens of heaven. Some of them do not even know that *another world exists on earth*, or that evil is found in cities.[61]

This passage evokes a potent metaphor in the literature of monasticism: the dichotomy between the city and the desert. Even if the literary metaphor misrepresents the history of monasticism, it also shaped it. Its force, as James Goehring points out, was its potency to give visible expression to an "ethical, ascetical stance."[62] It is also worth adding that in the context of travel writing, the spatial metaphor takes on additional power. The implied desert here both isolates, insulates, and protects the monk from any engagement with the world of the reader.[63] The author has erected an invisible barrier, a one-way glass that permits the reader to observe the monks while the monks remain oblivious to the reader's existence. That separation is critical to the work's ability to construct the "otherness" of desert asceticism. François Hartog would say that separation is the first rule of persuasive travel writing: "there is assumed to be a line of demarcation between the world in which one speaks and the world that is spoken about, between 'them' and 'us', between 'there' and 'here.'"[64] Oblivion to another world is one of several lines of demarcation, or acts of displacement, in the travelog.

Displacement also has a temporal dimension in the *History of the Monks*. In the tradition of ancient utopian writing, the author depicts the desert as a place where the distant past, in this case, the biblical past, is restored among the monks. Several temporal markers permit the reader to perceive not just a geographical divide, but even a temporal one. In one notice, Apelles tells the story of a monk who is considered to be "a man of another age, who surpasses in virtue all the monks of our own time."[65] That sense of "another age" is established early in the prologue, when the author marks the narrative's true beginning with "the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ." By turning back the clock in this way, the author can more readily align the Egyptian ascetics with Christ and the apostles: "They have performed cures, miracles and acts of power like those which the holy prophets and apostles worked. The Saviour performs miracles through them in the same way."[66] This remark reappears in the epilogue: "to this day, [the monks] raise the dead and walk on water just like Peter."[67] Both temporal references bracket the entire narrative into a biblical time, a framing technique that gives all biblical allusions in the work a temporal setting.

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[61] *Hist.mon.* prol. 5–6 (Russell, 49–50).

[62] "Encroaching Desert," 285.

[63] On the importance of barriers in utopian literature, see Peter Ruppert, *Reader in a Strange Land: The Activity of Reading Literary Utopias* (Athens, GA 1986), 27.

[64] Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 249.

[65] *Hist.mon.* 13.3 (Russell, 93).

Not just in their deeds, but even in their physical appearance, the holy men are described as resembling biblical figures. Abba Or, we are told, "looked just like an angel. He was about ninety years old and had a brilliant white beard down to his chest. And his face was so radiant that the sight of him alone filled one with awe."[68] Another desert father, Theon, had "the face of an angel giving joy to his visitors by his gaze and abounding with much grace."[69] And in the briefest notice, John in Diolcos is said to have "looked like Abraham and had a beard like Aaron's."[70] As any attentive reader of saints' lives might note, identifying saints with specific biblical figures is a common technique for authenticating the holy person's sanctity. To make their experiences of another human being intelligible, hagiographers resort to biblical language. By this act of translation, the complexity of a human life is reduced to a moment of biblical perception. With the biblical past, the pilgrim regains a sense of control. When put in biblical language, these portraits arrest the convulsions of ascetic life into a crisp, clear, biblical event. As Mary Campbell once described this double function of biblical language in pilgrims' narratives, it "domesticates the places thus 'described' *and* provides the thrill of strangeness."[71] In the case of the *History of the Monks*, however, it is persons, not places, that are domesticated and exoticized.

The cumulative and collective effect of these biblical moments says more about the region than about any single inhabitant. By populating the desert with so many patriarchs, prophets, and angels, the author of the *History of the Monks* wraps Egyptian monastic culture in a biblical haze. Anything and anyone resonates with a biblical event. To find biblical reminders in every rock, tree, and plain, is the mark of a holy land pilgrim, as Blake Leyerle has shown.[72] In those accounts, however, monastics are mainly portrayed as guides.[73] What the *historiai* achieve—in a way that holy place pilgrims' writings cannot—is to cast every monastic as a biblical figure in that *tableau vivant.*

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[66] *Hist.mon.* prol. 4, 9.

[67] *Hist.mon.* epil. 2.

[68] *Hist.mon.* 2.1 (Ward trans. modified).

[69] *Hist.mon.* 6.2; cf. *Hist.mon.* 7.1: "even the sight of [Elias] was very impressive." Although the connection to Elijah is explicit, no physical description is included.

[70] *Hist.mon.* 26.

[71] Campbell, "The Object of One's Gaze," 6 [Campbell's emphasis].

With the biblical language also comes a charmed existence. If cut apart from the rest of human society, both temporally and spatially, the distant peoples enjoy a completely different relation to nature. Like utopian descriptions of distant lands, the *History of the Monks* attributes remarkable longevity to these inhabitants. The ages of elderly monks are provided: Apollo's was at least eighty, both Abba Or and John of Lycopolis were ninety; Elias was expected to be one hundred.[74] Their advanced age pales in comparison to biblical patriarchs who lived over nine hundred years (cf. Gen. 5:3–32). But such longevity would have earned them a place in another work by Phlegon of Tralles, the *Long-Lived Persons*, an anecdotal list of people whose sole claim to fame was their advanced age.[75] Although there is no evident to suggest that the author, a monk from the Mount of Olives, would have been familiar with Phlegon's work, I mention the affinities to highlight the fact that longevity was one of the several types of marvels that were recorded by paradoxographers.[76]

The *History of the Monks* shares in the ancient fascination with longevity. Unlike Aristotle who examined the physiological and environmental factors that contributed to longer life spans,[77] the pilgrim-author offered no explanations. The fact of longevity indicated that the monks lived closer to the golden age of paradise. On the Island of the Sun, as Iambulus describes that utopia, inhabitants live until 150 years, when they voluntarily remove themselves from society.[78]

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[72] "Landscape as Cartography," 126–32; see also Campbell, *Witness*, 17–20.

[73] On pilgrims' interactions with monks, see Leyerle, "Landscape as Cartography," 128.

[74] *Hist.mon.* 2.1; 1.17; 7.1.

[75] Translated in Hansen, *Phlegon*, 50–57; on the background of this genre, see ibid., 17–20.

[76] Hansen (*Phlegon*, 17) mentions that the *Long-Lived Persons* was often combined with the *Book of Marvels* in later manuscripts. Even if Phlegon did not intend for the works to be conflated, the manuscript tradition shows that it was not beyond the scope of marvel collections to include longevity.

[77] "On Length and Shortness of Life," (Περὶ μακροβιότητος καὶ βραχυβιότητος), cited in Hansen, *Phlegon*, 19.

[78] Diodorus Siculus 2.57, trans. C.H. Oldfather, LCL (Cambridge 1935), 2:72.

Likewise, in Isidore's cloistered monastery, which, "was fortified with a high brick wall," the monks lived a self-sufficient existence. "Within the walls," as the pilgrims learned from the lone guest master, "were such saints that all could work miracles and none of them ever fell ill before he died."[79] Never diminished by pain or disease, human life flourishes in the desert. The frequent mention of walls both isolates and insulates these monks from the life-threatening forces of the desert.[80] What the walls also provide is another means of separating the mortality-ridden world of the reader from an existence that was uninterrupted, even perhaps by death.

Both walls and the desert can also demarcate a space where a new relation to nature can unfold. With inexhaustible supplies of food and water, humans and nature display their perfect compatibility. Wild animals are no menace to these wonder-working monks (although they pose a threat to travelers, as the epilogue reminds us).[81] A new relation to nature is introduced in the prologue: with the monks, "there is ... no anxiety for food and clothing."[82] Several stories relating to food echo that reassurance. When stranded in the desert without food or water, Abba Apollo and his disciples were visited by a "number of men ... complete strangers to them, who said that they had travelled a long distance." The strangers brought enough food to last for months, including "things that do not grow in Egypt": exotic fruit, fresh milk, even bread that was still hot from the oven—an oven in a distant land![83] In this brief tale, distance and miracle go hand in hand, where a stranger (the author) tells a story about strangers (Apollo and the monks) who encounter strangers (the gift-bearers).

Amid perpetual supplies of food, a moderate diet becomes a privilege conferred by abundance rather than a necessity eeked out of want. Iambulus's islanders, for instance, follow a prescribed diet.[84] Likewise, the monks practice remarkable moderation. More than half of a brief notice on Ammon (3.1–2) details with ethnographic precision, the spectacle of mealtime at a Pachomian monastery. The visitor scrutinizes every move: the three spoonfuls of soup that satisfy one monk; the singular gesture of raising food to mouth (one or two such moves comprise the entire meal), or the monk who slowly chews on the same piece of bread, for he will eat nothing else that day.[85] Although this restraint may not seem as miraculous as angels who deliver hot bread, the writer is equally astonished when he concludes, "I marvelled at these things, as was fitting."[86]

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[79] *Hist.mon.* 17.1–3 (Russell, 101).

[80] Antoine Guillaumont, "La conception du désert chez les moines d'Égypte," *RHR* 188 (1975):3–21; repr. in *idem, Aux origines du monachisme chrétien*, Spiritualité Orientale 30 (Bégrolles en Mauges 1979), 69–87, esp. 77–78.

[81] E.g., ibid., 4.3; 9.9; cf. Epil., 11–13. On this *topos*, see Ward, "Introduction," in *Lives of the Desert Fathers*, 43.

[82] *Hist.mon.* prol. 7 (Russell, 50).

[83] *Hist.mon.* 8.40 (Russell, 76).

[84] Diodorus Siculus 2.57.4; 2.59.1–5.

Even when it borrows familiar language of the Bible, the *History of the Monks* never loses touch with what is inexplicable in this distant world. That taste for the bizarre finds expression in the rambling lists that characterize paradoxography. In geographical and ethnographic works, one also encounters loosely connected lists of bizarre phenomena or strange customs.[87] The *History of the Monks* also relies on lists. Each notice presents a collage of personal traits and concrete details about the individual ascetic or community. Typically, the following details find their way into even the briefest notice: the ascetic's name, some information about his followers, characteristic physical features (*eikonismos*), noteworthy ascetic practices, and some special supernatural powers.[88] Even longer chapters appear as a list of separate anecdotes and sayings.[89]

The meaning of these lists depends on the literary context. As Patricia Cox Miller suggests, the repetitive language of ascetic discourse mimics the repetitive movements involved in the monk's discipline.[90] In travel discourse, however, lists are part of a larger strategy to exoticize the other, rather than to imitate it. The final notice, which appears as a straightforward list can illustrate the difference:

> We also visited another John in Diolcos, who was the father of hermitages. He too was endowed with much grace. He looked like Abraham and had a beard like Aaron's. He had performed many miracles and cures, and was especially successful at healing people afflicted with paralysis and gout.[91]

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[85] *Hist.mon.* 3.1–2.

[86] *Hist.mon.* 3.2 (Russell, 65). Several notices (usually brief ones) close with details about dietary habits, e.g., 6.4; 7.3; 15.4; 20.

[87] Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 102–6.

[88] E.g., *Hist.mon.* 2.1; 6.1; 26. See Schulz-Flügel, *Rufinus, Historia monachorum*, 8.

[89] E.g., *Hist.mon.* 12 (Helle).

[90] Patricia Cox Miller, "Desert Asceticism and the 'Body from Nowhere,'" *JECS* 2 (1994):137–54, esp. 144.

[91] *Hist.mon.* 26 (Russell, 117).

The biblical content of these characterizations is far less exotic than Herodotean descriptions of "dogheaded men and headless that have their eyes in their breasts."[92] The effect on the reader, however, is the same: lists consolidate disparate facts, leaving no room for explanation or connection. As James Romm observes in his survey of ancient geographical writing, "lists present the wonders of the East as an aggregation of facts; they demand that the multiplicity of eastern nature be accepted on its own terms."[93] In lists, the author of the *History of the Monks* found an effective tool by which to fragment the wonders of desert asceticism and then rearrange the pieces into an intelligible picture for the reader.

In several places, the author pushes lists to their logical limit, silence. As much as the author attempts to capture the wonders of monastic culture in lists, he also senses when those lists buckle under the sheer weight of marvels and desert existence. One hears the breathless exhaustion in this remark: "they saw and heard a host of other wonders, such as the tongue does not dare to utter or the ears to hear." Or, as he says of Abba Apollo's signs and wonders, "they defy description."[94] Both examples show how speechlessness was itself a frail placeholder for the complex experience of encountering a living saint.[95] As if to show the excessive nature of monastic marvels, this author at times had no choice but to stumble into silence. Yet, even in those instances when the strangeness defies description, the world of these Egyptian monks must be taken on its own terms.

The brevity of the notice allows the travel writer to order and control what the reader can see and know. Through this stilted and stunted literary form, the author provided a focusing device. Readers peered over high walls, through small openings, and across expansive deserts to catch a glimpse of Egyptian asceticism. The brevity of each hagiographical notice clipped this gaze short to preserve that distance and fascination between the audience and those living saints.

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[92] *Hist.* 4.191 (Godley, 2.395), cited in Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 91.

[93] Romm, *Edges of the Earth*, 91.

[94] *Hist.mon.* 8.7, 34 (Russell, trans. 71, 75).

[95] Campbell (*Witness*, 3) understands this predicament: "The traveler in foreign parts is faced with a world for which his language is not prepared: no matter how naïve the writer's understanding of language, the option of simple transparence, of verbal equivalences, is not open."

III. *The Monk as Monument*

As a travel writer, the author of the *History of the Monks* kept the world of the monks and that of the readers at arm's length from each other. From a distance, the reader could recognize the familiar world of the biblical past, but also see the strangeness of desert existence. All these techniques of displacement were mechanisms for controlling the diversity of Egyptian monasticism. Another key concept is the monument, a standard feature of ancient travel writing and historiography. As a measure of human greatness, monuments offered visible proofs of a culture's achievements or works, the *erga*, as Herodotus referred to them.[96]

Monuments are an important concept for understanding how exactly travel writing captures and grapples with an alien culture. As Henry Immerwahr observed for Herodotus, monuments are a useful lens through which to view another culture.[97] They are the visible traces of past greatness, individual items that can be examined apart from their historical, religious, or cultural contexts. From a writer's perspective, they can be examined in isolation, and even become the ordering device of a travel guide. John Elsner has reached a similar set of observations for the travel books of Pausanias, who used monuments and works of art as a "principal way to make sense of the Other."[98] For those who "love France but hate the French," as the old joke goes, a postcard, painting, or chateau provides a focusing device through which to grapple with (or, as the case may be, avoid) French culture. As an investigative device, a monument, according to Elsner, "can freeze what is (from the travel-writer's point of view) the essence of a people in a convenient and accessible miniature." Monuments provide a point of "access to the essence of a people."[99]

There are, indeed, architectural monuments in the *History of the Monks*; the pyramids, or, "Joseph's granaries," as they are called, come to mind.[100] But if the monument is a static point of access, the term may better apply to individual human beings, the living monuments, so to speak. Several of the techniques we discussed earlier support this way of conceptualizing people. By arresting monks in moments of biblical perception, the style of the notice turns the living saint into a monument. Like monuments, each ascetic is investigated in isolation, separated from other monks, from the city, from history, even from his own life.

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[96] Henry R. Immerwahr, "'Ergon': History as a Monument in Herodotus and Thucydides," *AJP* 81 (1960):261–90, esp. 263–69.

[97] Immerwahr, "'Ergon'," 271; Elsner, "Pyramids," 224, 228–29.

[98] Elsner, "Pyramids," 228.

[99] Ibid.

[100] *Hist.mon.* 18.3.

In Elsner's analysis, the monument also carries a special relation to time. The monument "becomes an idea about this something which was once (and may still be) an existent artefact." It adds "a dimension of history to the Other." As Elsner goes on to explain this subtle balance between the past and the present found in monuments,

> They encapsulate identity by embodying the past as it exists in the present; they focus in terms of the past the present's sense of being what it is. Any monument, by being simultaneously a legacy of the past and a fact of the present, historicises the Other by naturalising it in terms of a narrative of lineage.[101]

That ability to exist both in the past and the present characterizes best the pilgrim's perception of the monks. Like monuments, these ascetics bear the legacy of the biblical past yet remain, in Elsner's words, a "fact of the present." The "narrative of lineage," as the prologue makes clear at the outset, is the Bible itself. Together, distance and marvel conspired to move the reader to the edges of existence and to a biblical time. The reader could imagine a place where paradise was indeed restored and Jesus' miracles once again occurred.

Scripture was also a key instrument of displacement, as it propels this double movement outwards in space and backwards in time. Not only does the Bible generate a vocabulary for characterizing desert ascetics as imitators of biblical forbears, it also renders an unfamiliar landscape familiar and provides the continuity, or as Elsner put it, a "narrative of lineage," by which pilgrims made sense of the strangeness of desert monastic culture. When biblical allusions appear in brief, formulaic notices, the complexity of ascetic culture is reduced to a "convenient and accessible miniature," as Elsner understands monuments. Every ascetic life was reduced through the fragmentation and recombination of details. The brief notice "froze," as it were, these living artefacts of a distant culture. Marvels further crystallized the ascetics' identity as biblical monuments by merging the wonders of distant places with the miracles of a biblical past.

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[101] Elsner, "Pyramids," 229, cf. 224.

The stilted style of pilgrims' reports acted to stabilize and consolidate the sheer variety of monasticism in Egypt at the end of the fourth century. Their route took them to hermits and communities of monks, to the desert, the city, and the "inhabitable land" in between.[102] All these are mentioned in the travelog, even if the picture is skewed toward the desert.[103] Despite this variety, this author all but erased the presence of women ascetics from his tableau Egyptian monasticism.[104] Whatever the motives behind this omission, it is clear that the author needed a way to control, manage, and even reduce the diversity he put before the reader. The brief notice was the handle he needed. Travel writing and its various techniques of displacement allowed the desert to be demarcated and recast as a biblical land where paradise was restored and gospel miracles could find their full realization. In order to convince the prospective pilgrim of this other world, the writer relied on distance, marvel, measurement, and the Bible to condition both the presentation of that world and the reader's perception of it. And, judging by the popularity of pilgrimage to living ascetics at this time, his strategy worked.

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[102] *Hist.mon.* prol. 10; 1.32, 45, 46. Cf. Goehring, "Encroaching Desert," 288 and n. 28.

[103] Ibid., 288–96.

[104] On women in Egyptian monasticism, see Susanna Elm, *"Virgins of God": The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 1994), 227–372, esp. 311–30.

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Plates

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6. Ampulla with Sts. Menas and Thecla a–b
7. Ampulla with Sts. Menas and Thecla a–b

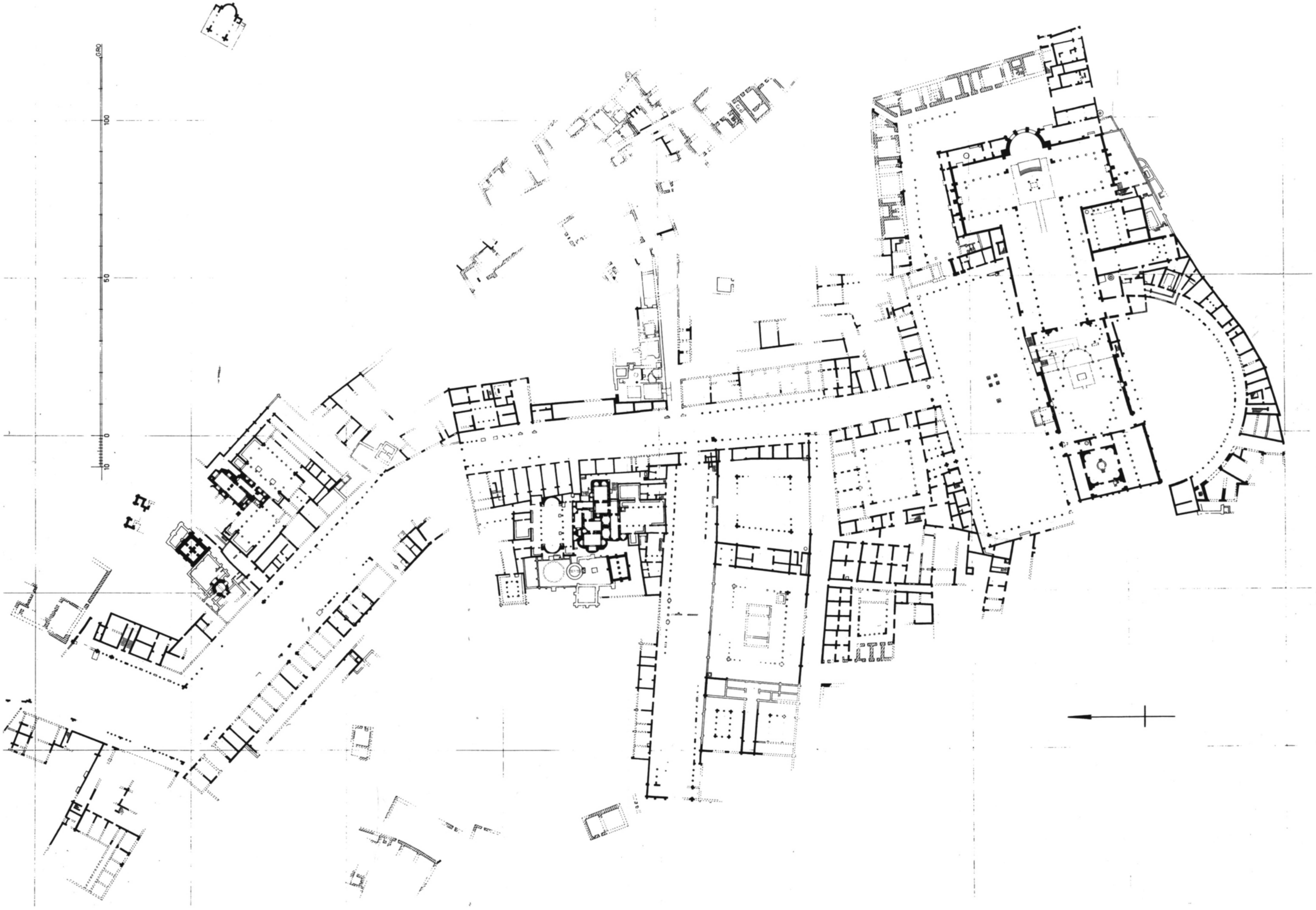
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Diagram 1: Abû Mînâ: The ecclesiastical center of Abû Mînâ

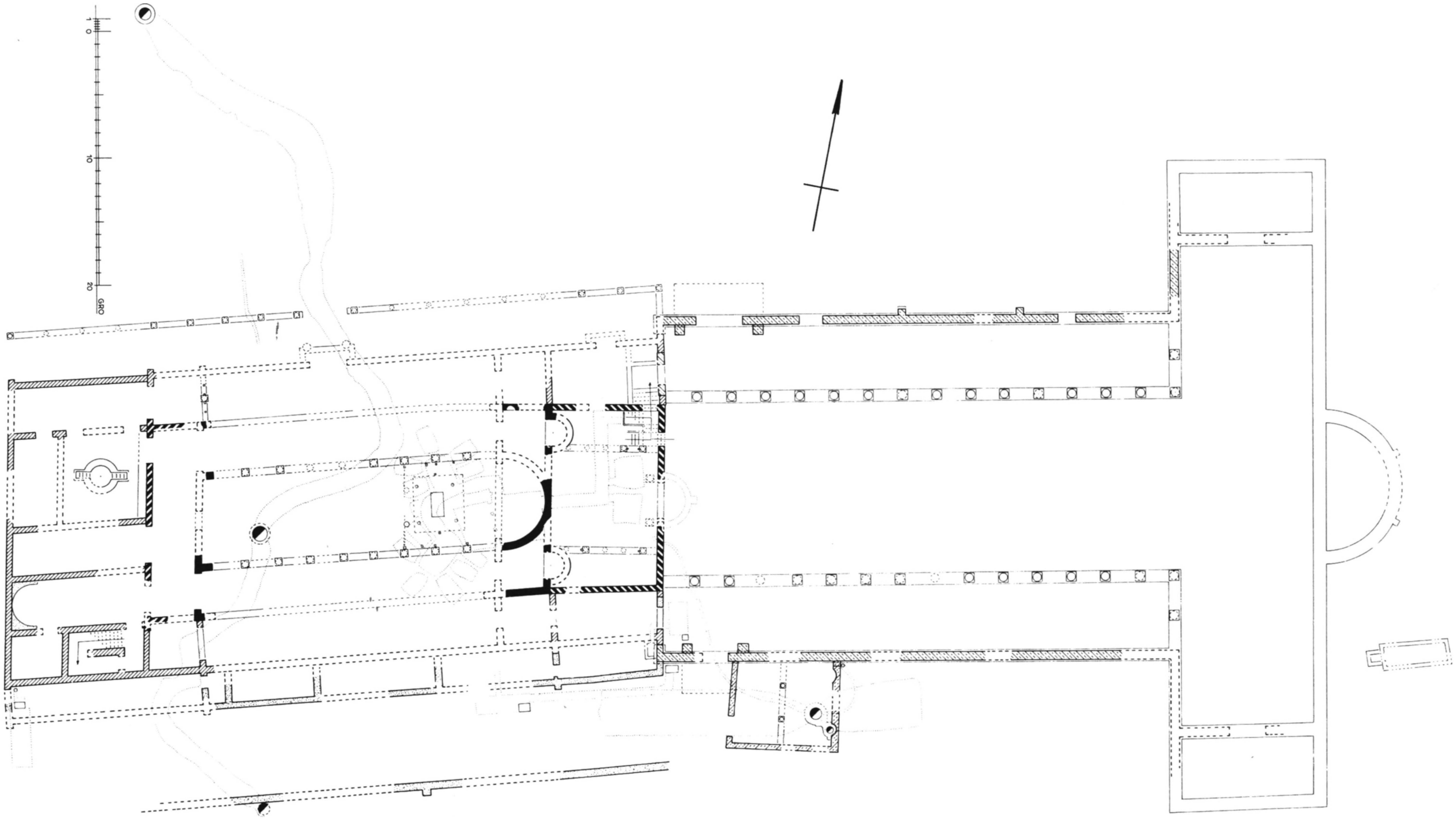

Diagram 2: 5th century Baptistry, Martyr Church, and the Great Basilica

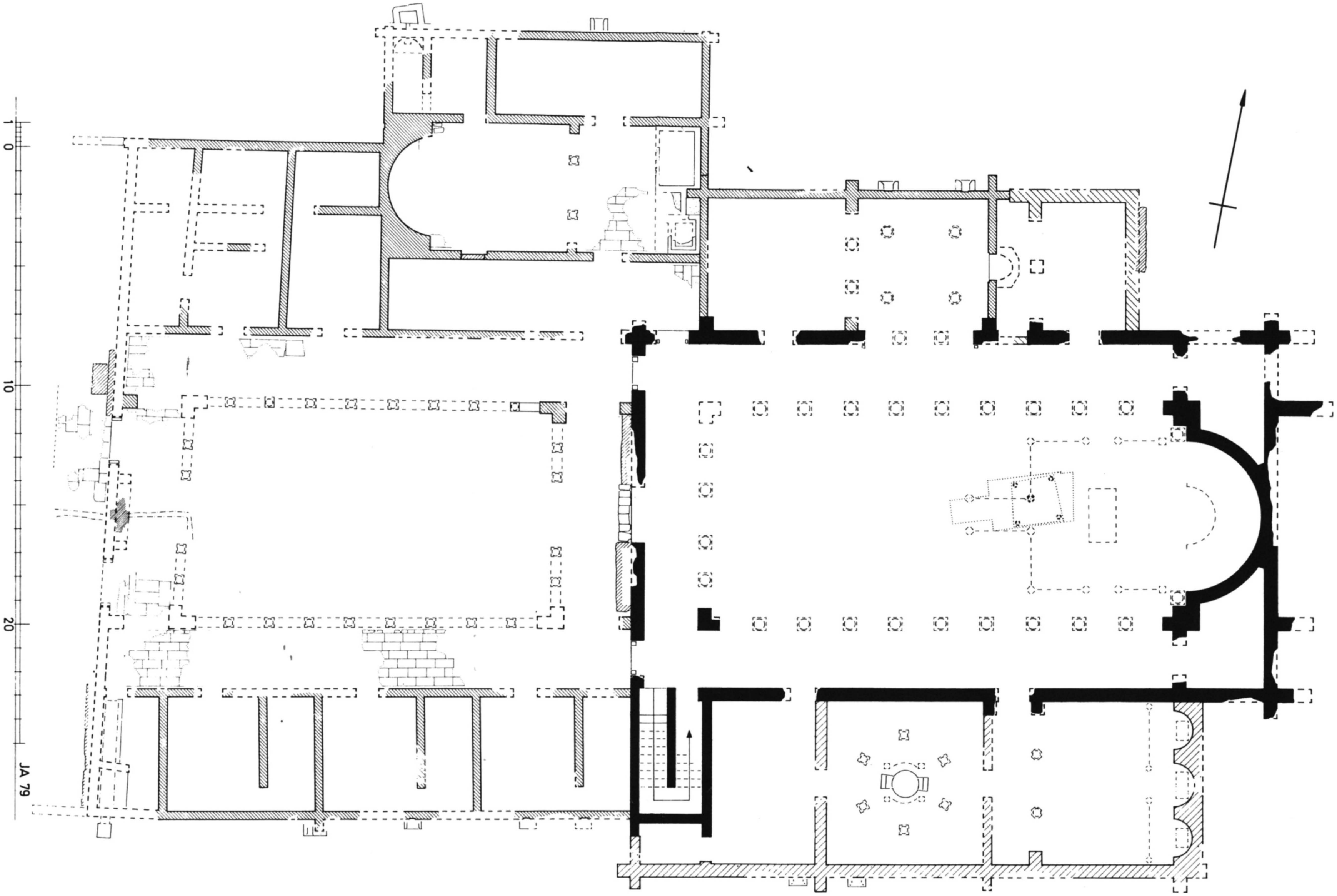

Diagram 3: Abû Mînâ: North Basilica

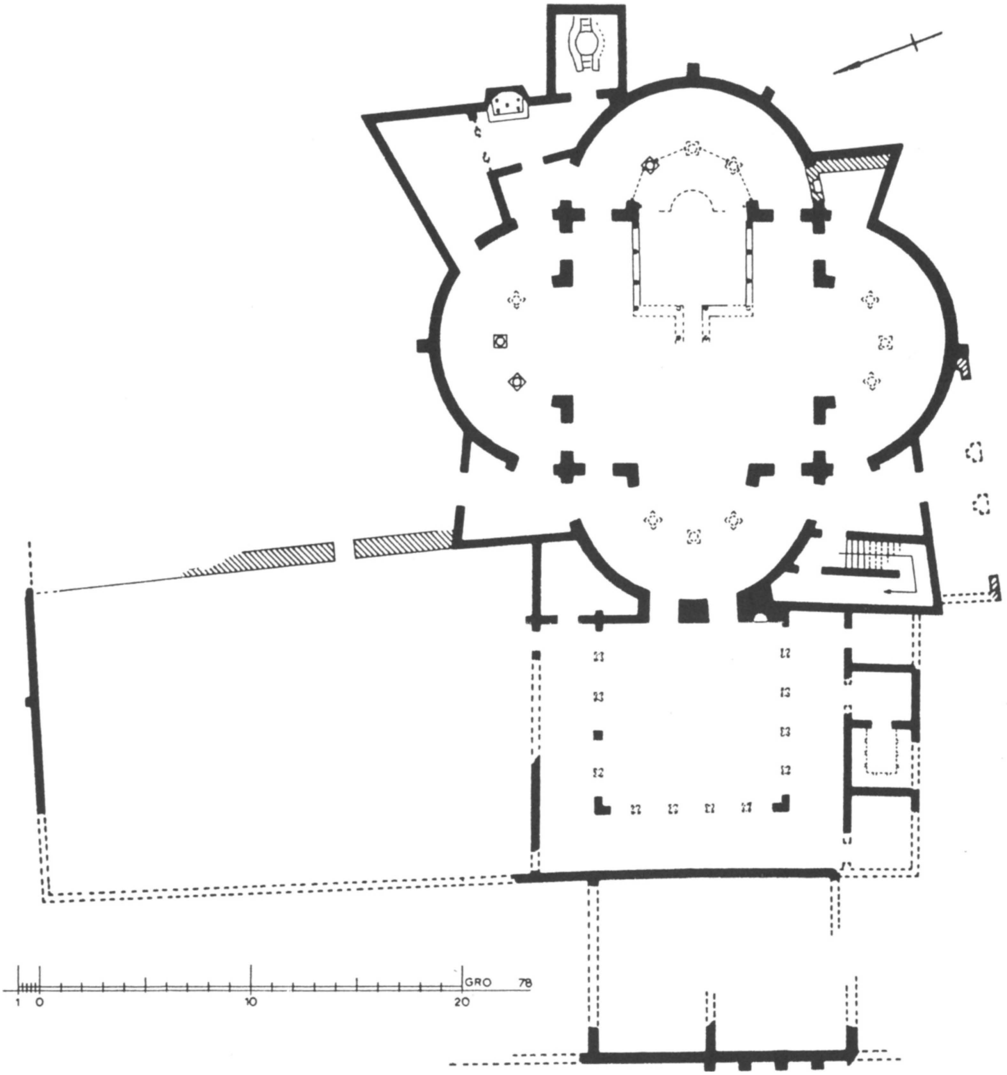
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Diagram 4: Abû Mînâ: East Church

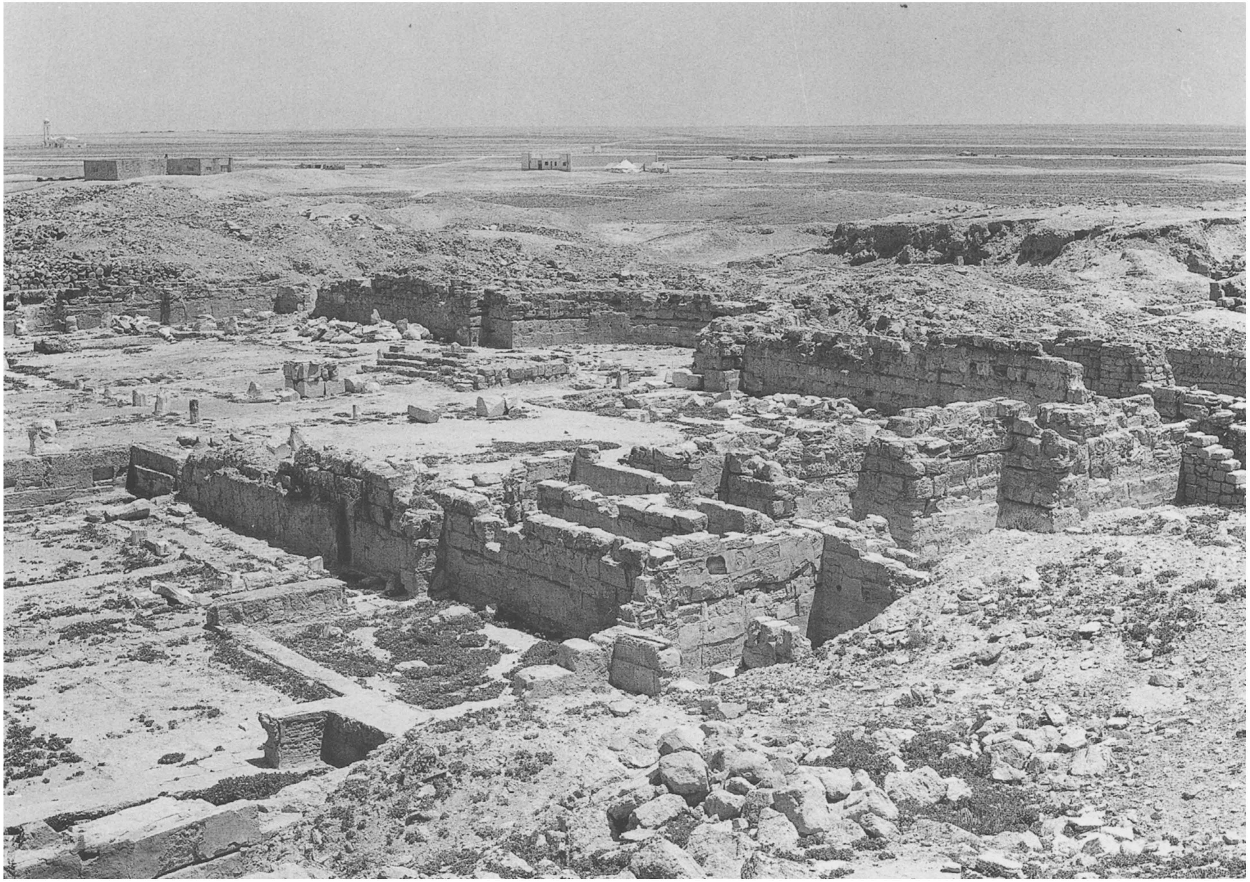

Plate 1: Abû Mînâ: Great Basilica (credit: Peter Grossmann)

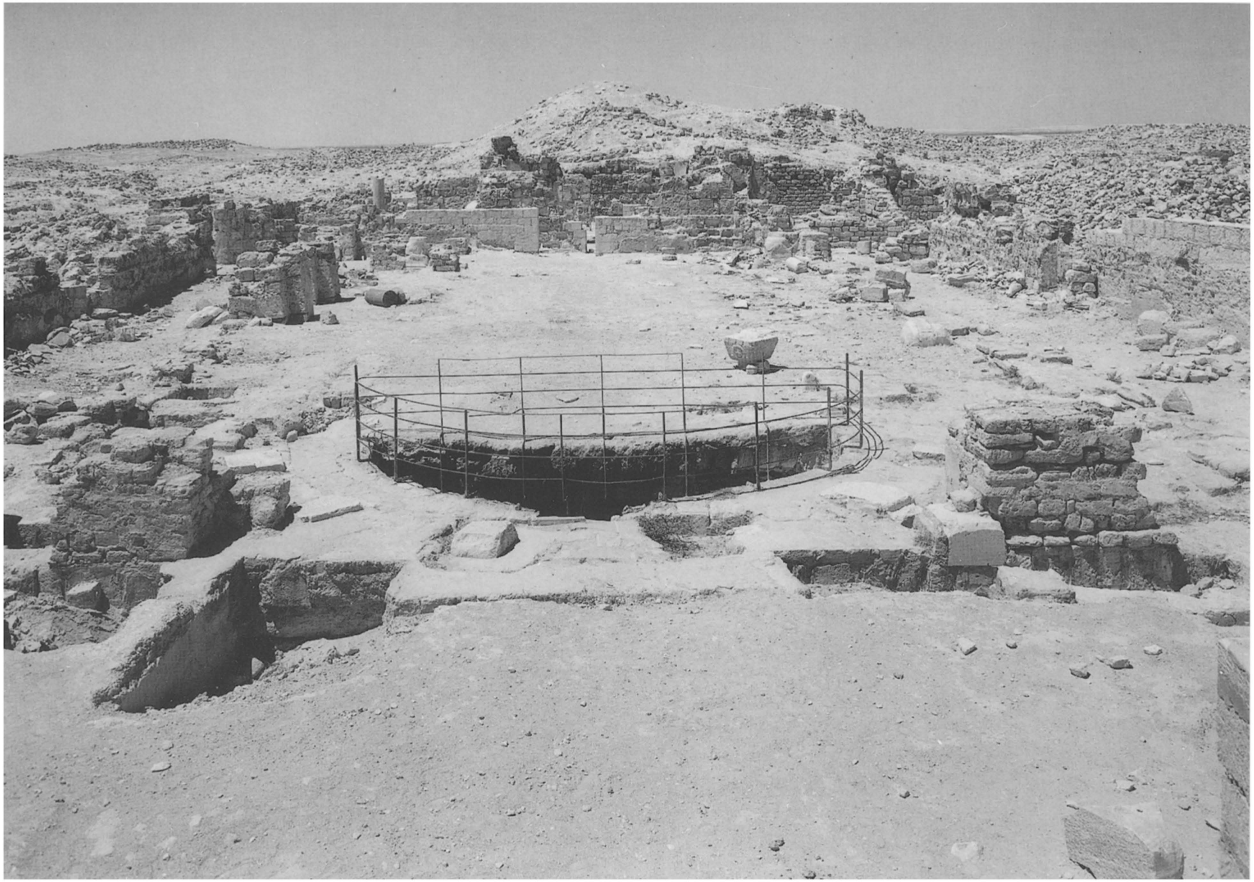

Plate 2: Abû Mînâ: Martyr Church (credit: Peter Grossmann)

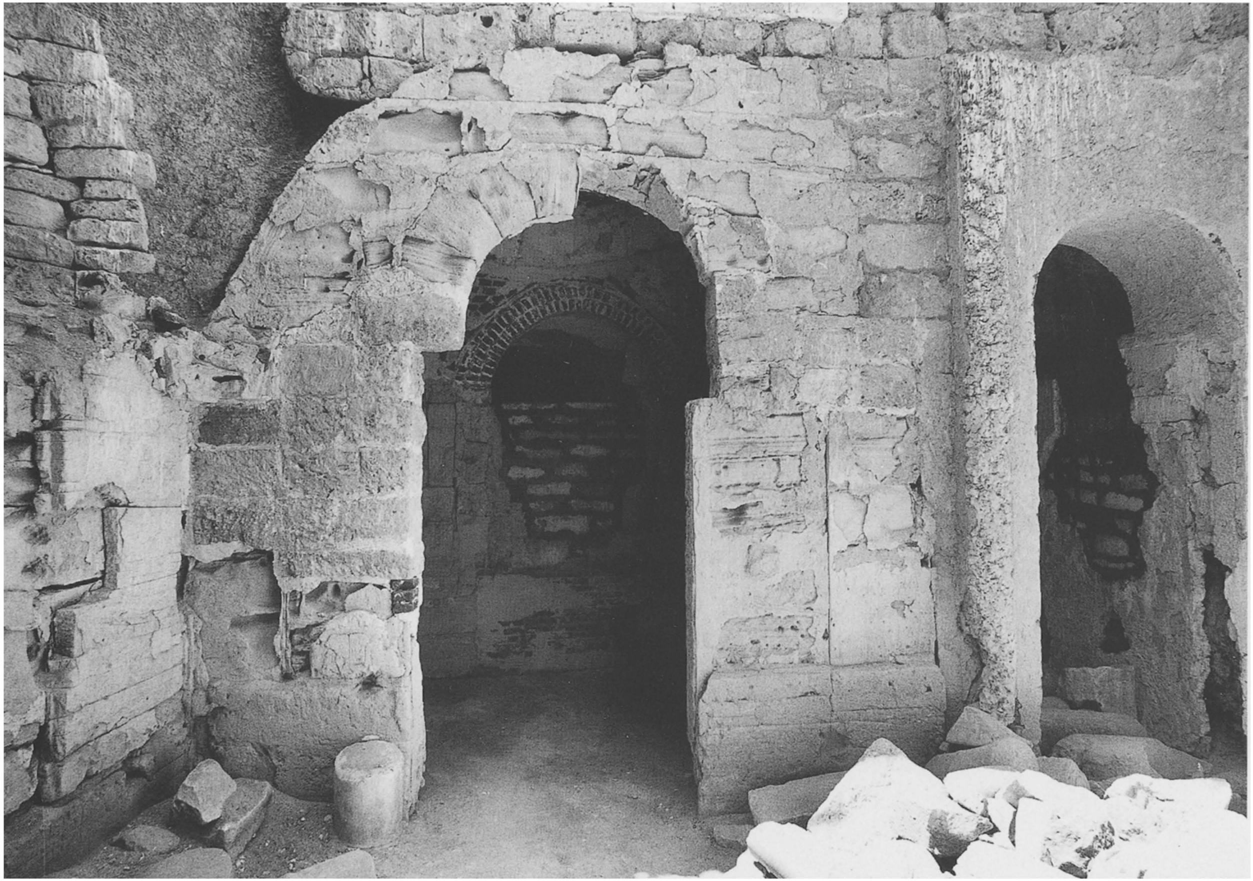

Plate 3: Abû Mînâ: Entrance to Crypt (credit: Peter Grossmann)

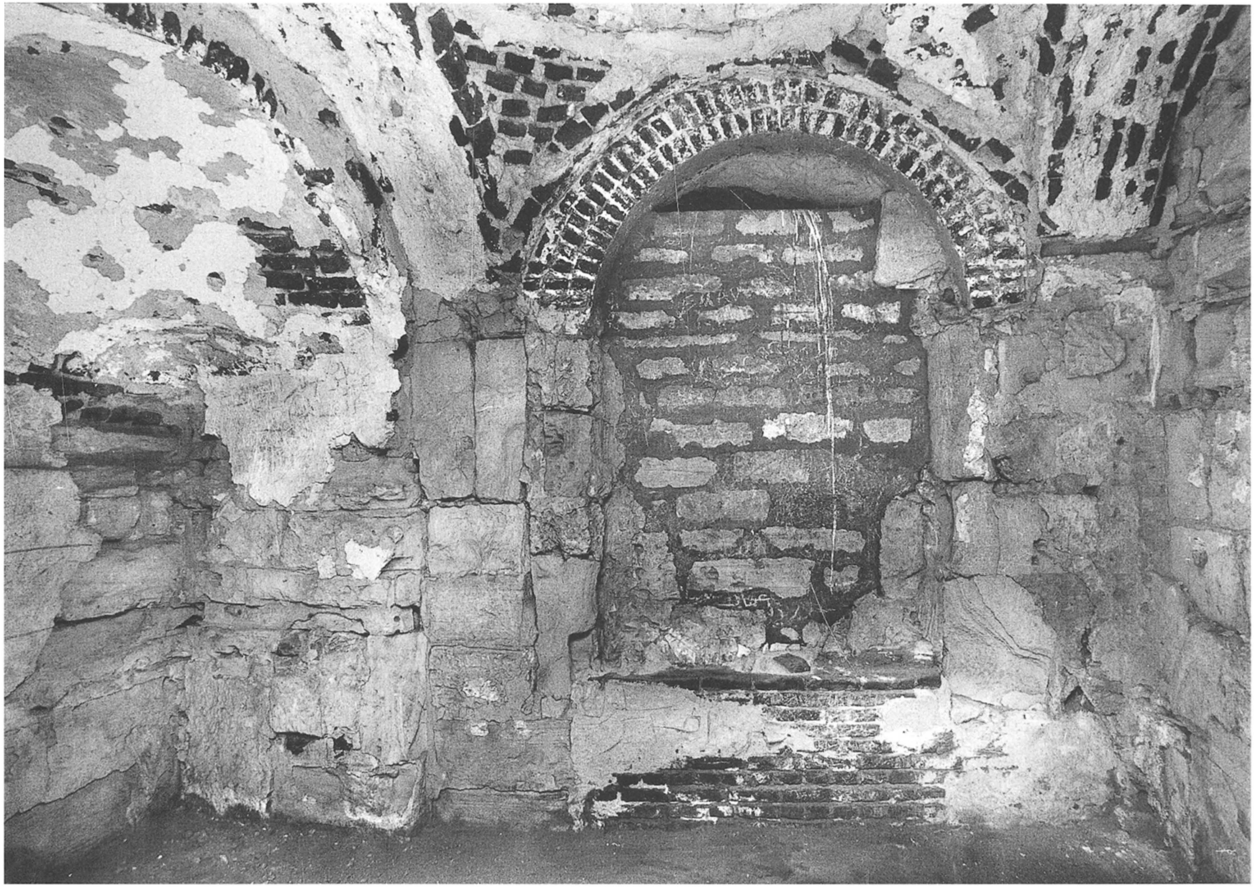

Plate 4: Abû Mînâ: Interior of Crypt (credit: Peter Grossmann)

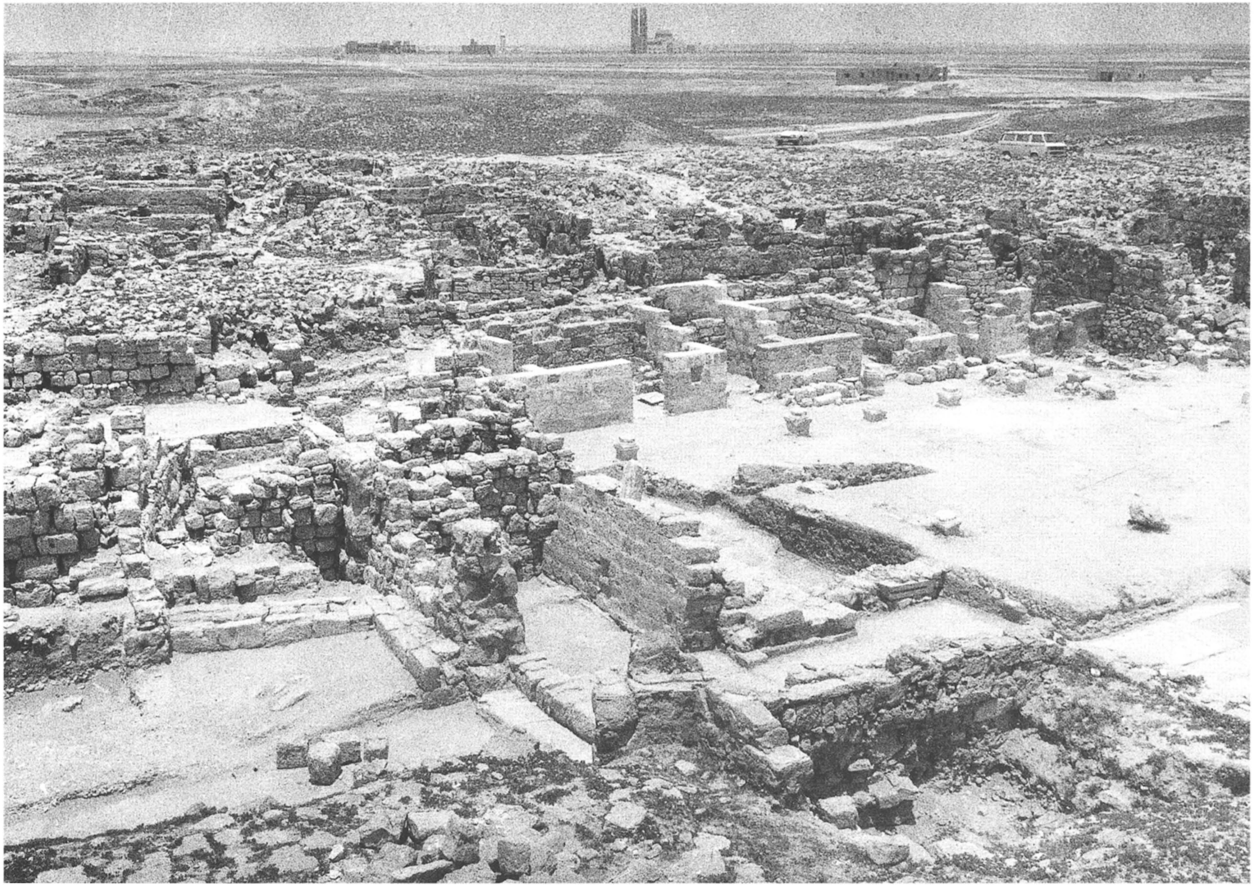

Plate 5: Abû Mînâ: Western End of Pilgrims' court (credit: Peter Grossmann)

Plate 6: Ampulla with Sts. Menas and Thecla (Cat. #11)
Terracotta. Diameter 17.7 cm. British Museum, EA69839.

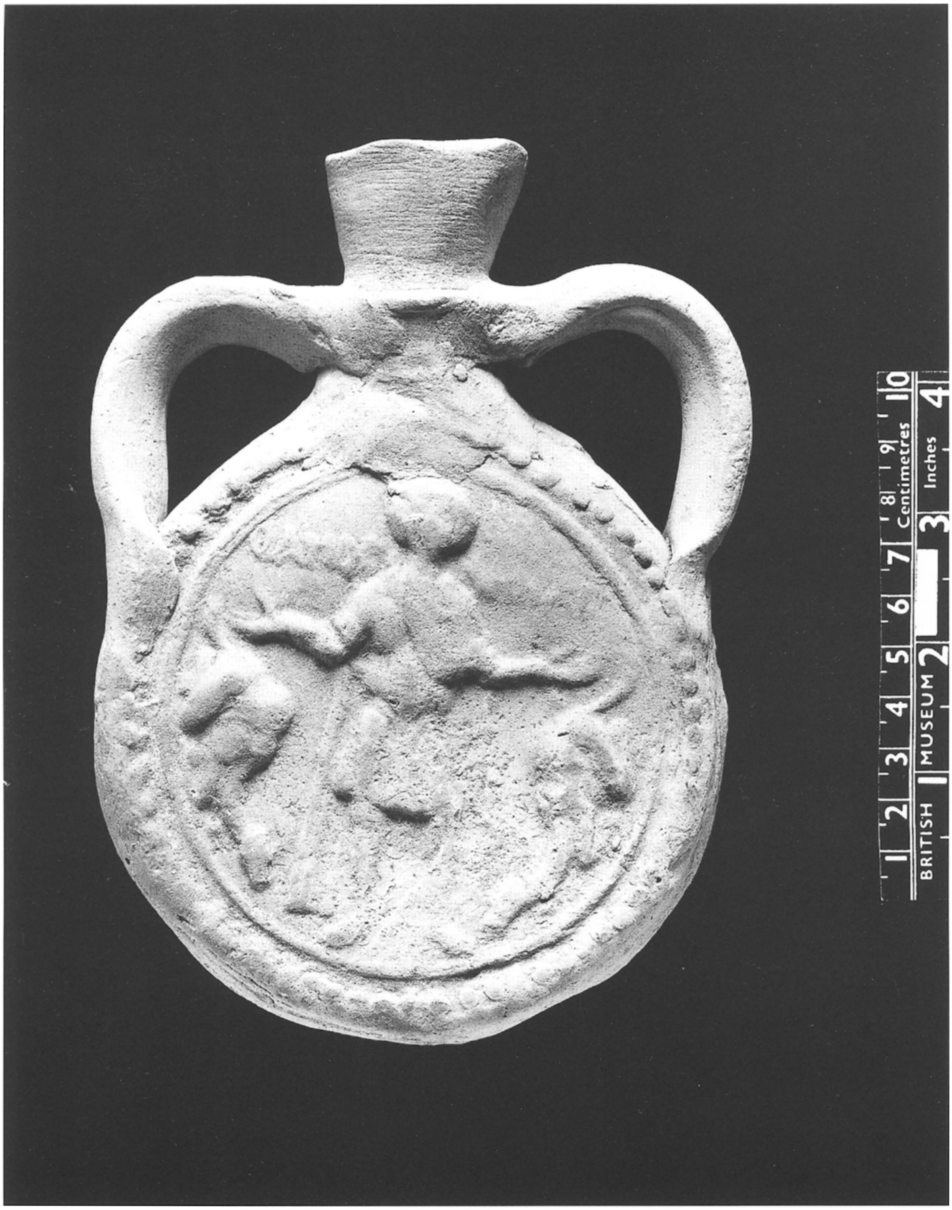
BRITISH MUSEUM
Centimetres
Inches
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
1 2 3 4

Plate 6a: Saint Menas.

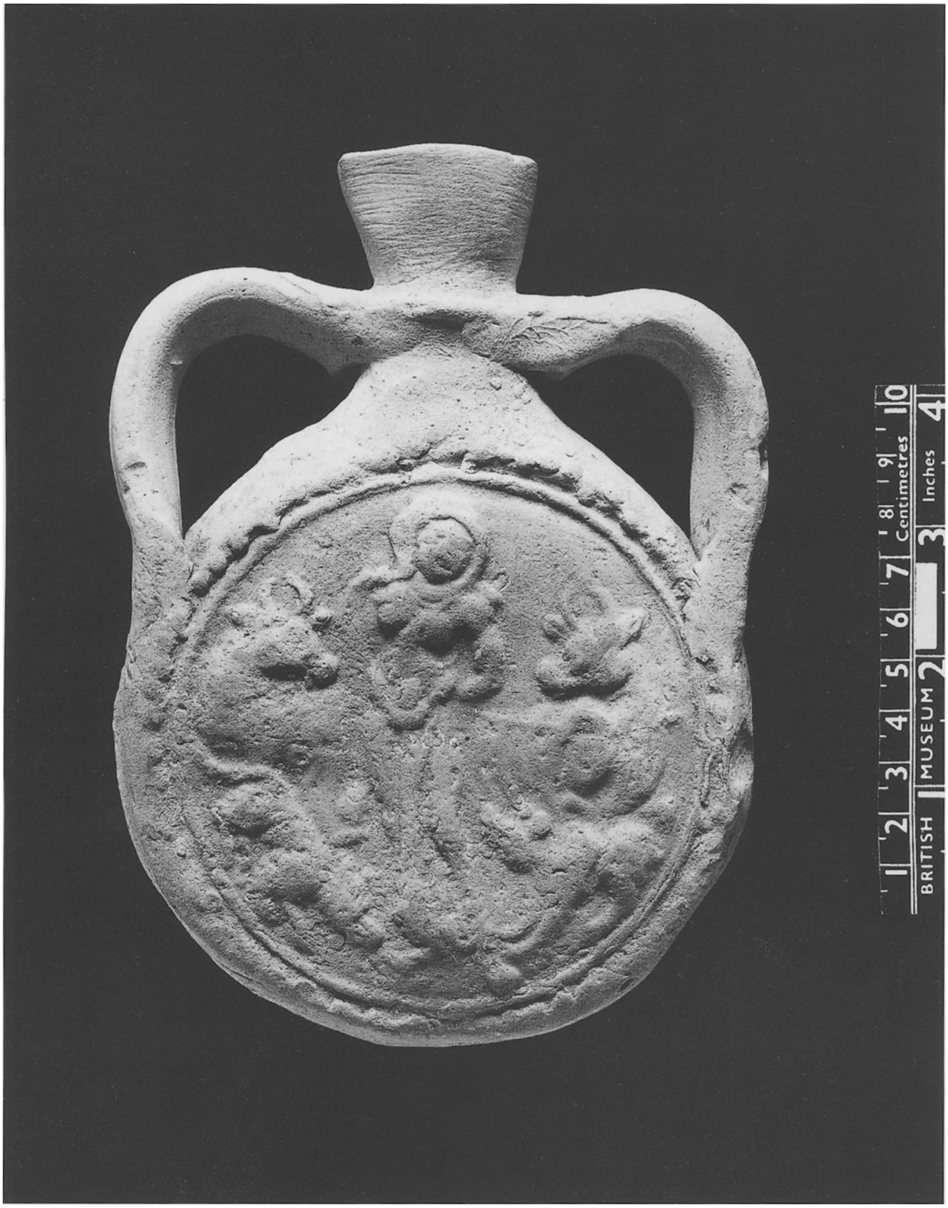
BRITISH MUSEUM
Centimetres
Inches

Plate 6b: Saint Thecla.

Plate 7: Ampulla with Sts. Menas and Thecla (Cat. #16)
Terracotta. Height 27 cm; diameter 17.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, MNC 1926. (Photographer: M. Chuzeville)

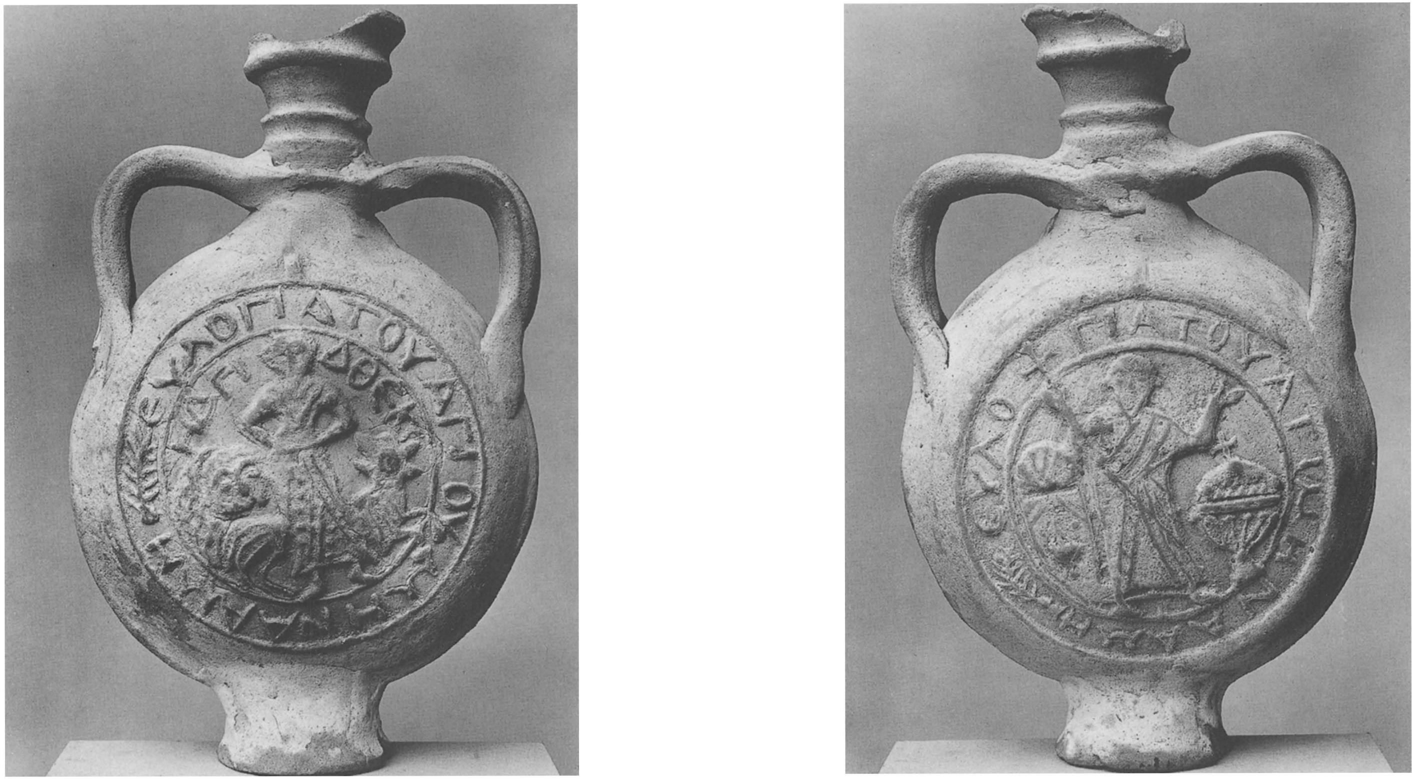

Plate 7a: Saint Thecla.

Plate 7b: Saint Menas.